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THE

TWIN SISTERS;

OR, THE

EFFECTS OF EDUCATION.

A NOVEL;

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY A LADY.

VOL. II.

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T H E

T W I N-S I S T E R S.

Lady Helena Melcome, in Continuation.

SO—What's to be done, now, my friend? Sir William is indisposed—really ill—no sham, Mira: I suspected it at first, myself; but it is a fact. A return of his fever, and my mother lays all to my account; for, tho' she knows not particulars, I have informed her all is over positively. She raves at me now, but will approve my conduct, and join in my resentment, when she is fully acquainted with my motives. How she idolizes the ingrate! Ah, who can blame her! Was I not once deceived by his specious, insinuating arts, myself? Yet I cannot bear—What has he done to bring on this fever on purpose to soften me—Though his servant says it never left him entirely; and writing that ugly letter I refused, after all, to read, has done his hand great injury.

He kept his room all day yesterday, and, his man says, was delirious last night, and called for “ His Helena—his loved—his lost “ Helena !”

VOL. II. B What

What a fool I am to weep, Mira—But I ever was a soft-hearted simpleton.

When my Lady heard of this, she sent post-haste for the physician, who has terrified us all to death, with his “burning fevers.”—Old idiot! What does he mean? He came to cure his patient, not to frighten us: though he may be in the plot.—Those doctors are very officious, Mira, and ever fond of encouraging marriages, and—and deaths, and such things.

Barville was very angry at his being sent for, and declared there was no occasion: I’m not sorry, though; for one would not have him die—Gracious Heaven! what a thought! Oh, Barville!—I was obliged to lay down my pen, for fear of a relapse.—How one always compassionates the sick! Thank God, my mother would not listen to me when I wanted her to allow of his going to an inn, as he once intended.—Blest be the old-fashioned hospitality that detained him!

Oh, were he not in the house, where I every moment hear of him, I should be worse.

“Who’s that?”—Only Sophy.

I start at every stir: sure I begin to fear his ghost—Yet I’ve done nothing to him.—A note—from my poor Barville! Give—give it quickly.

Yes, Mira, I have received it—read—pressed the scarce-legible lines—(why would he not send for, instead of writing to me)—to my lips, my bosom—and the dear characters

characters are all wet with my tears.—No, Barville! at such a time I can deny you nothing: I will see you—hear you—and oh that you could still deceive me, and I believe your vows!

He begs me, Mira, to allow him an opportunity of saying ten words only, and promises, if they do not extenuate his fault, (intirely to clear himself, he owns impossible) to submit to whatever punishment I shall inflict, even, should such be his doom, to that of an eternal banishment: that, flattered by the inquiries (those officious servants!) he learns I yet condescend to make about a life at present not worth his care, he depends on my further compassion, and has risen to attend me.

Ah, my friend! do I not already know all he can say to *extenuate* the fault he owns? He will but tell me of some former acquaintance, who long—long before he saw Helena, listened, too fondly listened to the tale of love; and that hearing her aspersed, his gratitude (only) would not permit him to forbear the warm retort, which drew on the fatal quarrel—fatal indeed to my repose. Barville, live, and be happy!—But here let it end; for, think you with this flimsy veil to blind me to the truth that glares before my open eyes! Yet, Mira, 'twere dangerous to exasperate him in his present situation.

I've humoured his request—But—He's at the door—Heaven support me thro' this last trial.



Thrice has my pen attempted to stain the spotless paper with my guilt, and thrice has it dropped from my trembling hand.—Yet, as a punishment, I will write; for what severer punishment can I suffer than that of imparting (and to Mira) all the shame I feel! And justice, too—Receive it, Mira, therefore—receive it—And, perhaps, this may be the last letter you will ever consent to open from me.

Whence came it, thou contrast to Helena's follies, whence came it that minds dissimilar as ours, have folded thus in friendship? Friendship, I ever thought, required the same propensities to vice or virtues, to support it long: then that such contraries should ever have blended, was indeed wonderful? But you never knew me till now.

Elmour is nothing to the wretch that I am: Mira, Barville's life, too, perhaps—

All ideas but of his danger vanished with his entrance. That a few hours should work such a dreadful change! I attempted, but could not rise, and burst into tears. Joy brightened his faded eyes, as he gazed on me, for a moment—then, throwing himself at my feet,

“ Am I then forgiven? Oh, I thought you could not so easily tear me from your heart, or I had never sustained at all the weight of your displeasure.”

“ Rise, Barville; Alas, you scarce are able. Those burning hands—For Heaven's sake

fake let nothing that has passed distract you now—And I—”

He leaned back on the sofa; and, with a smile that reached my heart, went on.

“ ‘Tis not the play of wretched design, my Lady, that, by raising your compassion, would soften your resentment: I am not well; and, while able, will hasten to satisfy—”

“ I have no resentments, Barville—Be but well, and I desire no other satisfaction—We’ll defer the subject.”

“ Not for the world! I cannot breathe in peace, while such impressions remain in my Helena’s bosom.—And could you believe I would interest myself thus about a worthless woman? or that an indifferent subject could detain a moment my bounding heart from pursuing the idol object that was waiting to crown all its desires! Yet I have erred—The angel I fought for, required not my vindicating arm to disprove imputations, nothing but envious malice could offer: and, but to suppose such excellence needed assertion, was a madness next to doubting it.”

“ Heaven grant me patience! Is it thus you mean to satisfy me, Sir William? And is it to me you talk of angels you adore! To her, then, I resign you, for she alone has a right to the life you endangered for her.”

Nothing, Mira, but the faded picture beside me, could have restrained my indignation from breaking out to greater violence; for

who could understand him? But, judge of my increasing astonishment, when, folding the arm next me round my waist, he exclaimed,

“ And for her alone I wish its continuance. Oh, who could then have kept me from my Helena’s bosom, but herself!”

This was too much—I hardly believed my senses: and, as I knew he would not, by a direct falsehood, attempt to re-instate himself in my favour, for a moment I concluded him again delirious.”

“ Me, Sir William! Impossible! For who would dare—who could asperse my character? or even breathe my name with disrespect! You dream—You could not vindicate a worth was never doubted. -

“ Sweet warmth! ’Twas this censure I apprehended; and the fear of alarming a delicacy I knew to be a lively as it was pure, alone induced me to conceal an event, that would but give it pain.”

“ Ah, Barville! and what has been my gratitude!”

Do you believe, Mira, I could bear the conscious feelings that oppressed me? ’Twas well he hid my shameful face in his dear bosom—and not all his raptures, at hearing the fond excuses I owned, in mitigation of my offence, nor generous efforts to reconcile me to myself, could enable me to support his eye.

The more backward Sir William was to acquaint me with particulars, the more I was convinced

convinced there was some foundation for the censure he had so resented.

Open malice strangles its own birth: we despise glaring falsehoods too much to feel them—Repelled by innocence, the shafts fall harmless; but, where the part is sore, we shrink from the slightest touch.

I hinted to Sir William I should certainly conclude his having felt the arrow shot at me the more keenly, because pointed by truth; unless he told me all. He smiled, and gave me such a look!

He used to be half afraid of me, Mira; but now I am so humbled, I dare not call to order; and he'll certainly grow saucy—Stay till he's well, though, and I get over this sad, repenting fit. Yet, I verily believe, this last bout, and the pretty figure I now make, (Mira, how the note I wrote, stares me in the face!) will overset my penetration talents, for some time at least.

In vain would Barville have turned the conversation: like a doubled hare, he could not escape me.

“ And so, Sir. you have really punished in another, the opinions you admit yourself? But how did he provoke you? Come—I will know.”

“ I would have pitied a rival, in silence, had he only hated me for the success he envied; but, what a madman must he be, who, because too far removed from its rays, to

feel the sun's warm influence, not only magnifies the trifling specks lost in its lustre, but affects to doubt the light he cannot enjoy!"

" But who was this rival?"

(There were several at Bath, Mira.)

" And what the specks that displeased him? Come—a circumstantial account."

" The evening of the day you left me, as it was to be my last at Bath, I consented to pass with a few friends; and with them, contrary to my expectation, I found three of your unfortunate admirers. Captain Galloner's character I ever respected; but of the other two (particularly Sir James Cicil, my antagonist) I had not a high opinion."

" Bless me, Sir William!—Was it Cicil with whom you fought? How could you mind a wretch, who was only vexed at my having led him a dance (only in sport) from London to Melcome-Grove, from thence to Southampton, then back again, and so on to Bath: and positively, had you not stopped the career, I had continued leading him over hill and dale, till the fellow broke his neck, perhaps—and all for a little diversion, Sure the fop had not the vanity to presume 'twas for his sake I did so?"

Barville looked grave, and sighed—Was this one of the little specks, I wonder?

" Well, Sir—how then?"

" My mind, employed on what it had just lost, and all it would soon regain, could not be

be supposed to attend much to the jovial sports of the evening. Sir James, who had often regarded me with a gloomy look, now elated by wine, with an irony, for which you know him distinguished, rallied me on my absence, silence, and melancholy; affecting an ignorance of the cause he had so much reason to understand.

“ Was I in love? and (like him, alas!) reduced to despair? Ah, Sir William! take warning from me, and,” (with an affected sigh, and lengthened face of woe) ere too late, beware of pursuing a shadow, perhaps, like that for which I now thus groan in spirit. Yes: like a—”

“ Helena—urge me no further: sweet girl, be satisfied.”

“ Proceed, Sir William: Like what? You must oblige me: like what?

“ Yes, like a misguided traveller, benighted, I was led, through bogs, through brakes, through briars, to the edge of a precipice; when, just as another step had plunged me into everlasting mires, the lovely ignis-fatuus bounced, cracked, and vanished—and left unhappy me wandering on the Stygian banks of despair, to deplore the folly that rashly prompted my confidence in a vapoury meteor, that promised but to deceive, and glared but to destroy.”

I wonder how I looked, Mira? I could have torn the fellow’s eyes out.—Would to

fortune he were once again in my power; he should not stop at the edge of the precipice, if this same ignis-fatuus could have given one push further.

" Provoked at his easy assurance" (continued Barville), " and nettled at the incautious laughs his solemnity of tone and manner extorted from the company, I replied:—Perhaps, Sir, what you believed a meteor, was some resplendent star, that, majestically rising to its bright meridian, your lively imagination fondly believed but moved to invite your wild pursuit? No wonder, then, you still followed in vain: but why madly " bay the moon," because your deluding vanity would grasp at what all your powers could not reach?"

" And so (regarding me all the time I spoke, as if listening to a sermon, his folded arms resting on the table; with the same insufferable style, and tragedy-tone, he exclaimed)—And, so, for my Juno, grasped a cloud!—Didn't I, Galloner?—And, by heaven! so did you too."

" I found myself growing warm, and was vexed with myself for being disturbed by such levity and nonsense: Captain Galloner seemed hurt too, and, with someo thers, tried to change the conversation; but Cicil, instigated by the loud plaudits of his fellow in disappointment (Mr. Greeves, who enjoyed my being mortified in something), went on:—

" Why, Sir William Barville, so grave? One would almost imagine you shared in my misfortunes? How kindly sympathizing!"

" I do

" I do indeed, Sir James Cicil—I do, indeed, pity you; from my very soul I pity you."

" Far be it from me, my Helena, to triumph over a fallen rival; but this man was below the title no one should be ashamed of boasting. I could not command myself; and this was said with an air that called out all the smothered malice of his bosom, to his face: but, assuming more composure, he replied,

" Sir, I sincerely thank you; and, in gratitude, would warn you from my fate."

" You need not take the trouble; there's not the least danger of my fate's resembling yours, Sir James: I pursue no shadow."

" Alas! the greater danger—for then yours may be the more substantial ill: but I apprehended, from the heavy gloom that bent your brows, there might have been some similitude in the malign influence of those *resplendent stars*, that, from their dancing spheres, shed poison on our hearts. By heavens! mine—"

Barville paused, unwilling to proceed—

" In short, my Lady, the rest was much in the same strain, and equally ridiculous—"

I'm all attention, Sir William—all impatience. Pray go on—spare not a word, I charge you.

" Mine! O the flirting, light coquette! Cicil, push about the bottle, cried Galloner.

" Any company arrived to day?—asked one.

" You

" You leave Bath to-morrow, Sir William?—another.

" Perhaps not, Sir (fixing my eyes sternly on Cicil): that gentleman seems desirous of engaging my stay here a little longer.—The blood boiled in my veins; yet I was puzzled how to behave. He had mentioned no name; nor, by a direct allusion, afforded me an opportunity of demanding a further explanation: yet, though there was no resembling feature, every one knew, as well as myself, the lovely picture his envy attempted to shade, from his having so long and publickly addressed Lady Helena Melcome.—But then the horror of having the dear—the sacred name I adored—the name which never should be breathed but in the awful accents of deepest respect, bandied about, in a midnight tavern brawl—Oh, Helena! my heart recoiled at the idea of drawing from its delicate recesses, the concealed image of my love! But, what could I do?—I pain you, my life—Dear Helena—let us quit the subject for ever."

(And he drew me to his bosom. Pained, Mira! How my heart was stung!)

" Oh, hide me, Barville—hide me, for ever, in that dear heart—But no:—I am not worthy the possession of so pure, so generous a mansion—Cast me away—Hate, despise me—as I hate and despise myself"

He pressed me closer to his breast. What did he not say, to soothe, to re-assure me?

Again

Again I urged him to proceed.—Mira, every word was the correcting-rod of my follies.

“ I am happy (retorted Sir James) in engaging attention so *distinguished* (with an emphasis) at that of Sir William Barville’s; and, though I cannot render my powers of attraction so conspicuous as those he boasts, rejoice at having succeeded in drawing some fire from his eye at least: and if—”

“ Once more the company endeavoured to interrupt this, and introduce some other topic; but the Baronet, bending forward, as if waiting for my reply, and eager to catch the first word,”

“ My looks (said I, as calmly as I could) ought only to have been the looks of admiration, on the detection of my strange mistake; for I had heard of a far different object from that you have described, as that of your pursuit: but now convinced the report was quite erroneous, have only to beg forgiveness of the excellence I supposed you alluded to, for believing, one moment, such contraries could be the same.”

“ Strange, Sir! that you alone should mistake a likeness, all the world allows! As to the excellencies of your Dulcinea, I know nothing of them; but, I’ll be d——d if my jilt excelled in any thing but art, airs, and deception.”

“ What! (asked the impious Greeves) had she neither beauty, good-nature, nor good sense?”

Again

Again Barville stopt—Now for it, thought I—His increasing hesitation, and emotion, convinced me this was the fore place he most felt, and wished to hide from me; and, for that very reason, I was more curious to find it.

“ Just handsome enough (replied the base calumniator of the lovely fruit beyond his reach) to give herself airs, but not to prevent her hating every beauty she saw; and just sense and good-nature sufficient to add to the plagues of eternal repentings.”

(Could you not have brained the wretch, Mira?)

“ I was obliged to be the very drudge of her rapacious vanity, while dangling in her chains (monkey that I was for my pains)! for she still thought it

“ *My duty,*

“ *To honour the shadow of her shoe-tie.*”
And, by Heaven! if I forgot myself, and but presumed to praise the colour of that of any other woman, Madam was in the pouts for a week.”

“ You did not complain of that? (said Mr. Greeves). ‘Twas a sure sign of your consequence.”

Fine lessons, those, for Sir William, Mira!

“ Not at all: the mere lust of praise—me; you—’twas all the same thing: the little glutton devoured all, and was never satisfied. Yet happy was I in escaping so well! for, if indifference could thus torment me, what had affec-

affection done? The Lord have mercy on the miserable he distinguished by her love! for, by heaven! she'll be jealous of the passing air he breathes, and sicken at the very life she exists in, because he owes it to any other agency than hers! Was not I in luck, Sir William?

“ Certainly: for what so *ungrateful* to an enamoured heart as excess of affection from the beloved object! And, as you at first *loved* her very faults, you might afterwards *hate* her very virtues. Then the *ease* with which you bear her loss is so *apparent*—while you gladly resign your mistress, thus to delight in dwelling for ever on her mere idea. The very *shadow* of the faults that so disgust you! Oh! you cannot bear to think—to talk of them; but when—the constant subject of your waking dreams! Lucky? Oh, the most *lucky* escape in the world!”

“ The eyes of all were now directed to Cicil, who, irritated almost to madness, darted on me the fiend-like looks of rage.”

“ Do you mean to banter me, Sir William? You may, with the haughty supercilious swell of a triumphant rival, exult over me in silence; but, by G—d, your tongue shall not in vain insult me.”

“ I your rival! I disclaim the title: you have either diverted your imagination, or indulged your rancour, with drawing characters I know nothing of; and, I repeat, I disclaim all pretensions to such an original.

“ And

“ And I too repeat for the only satisfactory words you will receive from me, not a gentleman in company but understands my allusion—I appeal to Captain Galloner—”

“ Sir James, that, from other attending circumstances, may easily be guessed at; though not from the smallest resemblance. We all know the lady you addressed, but not the faults—”

“ You, Galloner, can you deny, who have so severely felt them!”

“ Could virtue, goodness, sense, be painted (replied the noble fellow), that lady might fit for the picture; but, scarcely can the beauties of her person, which yield alone to those of her mind, be reached by description’s most delicate touches! Her’s might perfection be, were perfection ever attainable: if, then, a few trifling foibles blend, what eye shall dare explore them, lost, as they are, amid a blaze of excellences; much less presume to call them out to censure!”

“ This man was formed to love, Helena—I could have wept on his bosom the mingling tears of gratitude and pity: but I was to avoid betraying an interest that might lead to application, and answered,

“ Light and darkness, Sir, cannot differ more than your description and that gentleman’s: of the justice of his, I cannot be a judge, for I never saw the lady; therefore could never be his rival.”

“ He thought proper to address me in me-
taphor

taphor, and I trifled in return, but could shew no triumph where I own no victory.”

“ Nay, Sir William, (said Greeves) seen her you have, though you may not own the likeness.—What, Cicil, are you so mere a dauber, that the name must be added at the bottom of the piece to explain it?—For shame!—”

“ I saw the mischievous tendency of this artful designer, and instantly cried out,

“ Beware, Sir James Cicil, of mentioning any name with disrespect, you have the slightest reason to believe I revere.”

“ D——n! Am I to be slighted by a jilt, and brow-beat by her bully!”

“ Here it was, my Helena, every recollection forsook me: And now, how shall I hope forgiveness for tearing away the image Captain Galloner had just pressed closer to my heart; that talisman that should still have defended it from feeling the poisonous shafts of envy; and for joining to that detested word, a name that never understood its meaning? Yes, in that delirious moment, I fell myself into the snare from which I would have guarded Cicil; and rising, while rage almost choaked me, I struck him on the shoulder, and madly cried,”

“ ’Tis not Lady Helena Melcome you allude to?—This moment declare it is not—But, Cicil, dare not repeat the name, I charge you—a name that must not, in my presence, pass the impious lips that could attempt

tempt to blast a character, that gentleman has already proved so amiable."

" With equal passion the wretch replied,

" And is it you who shall prescribe to me! robber! you, to whose insinuating arts I owe her loss! Yes; I declare it—The deceptive jilt—the alluring, artful, vain coquette I meant, was—"

" Stop!—Or, by the Powers of Heaven, I swear—"

" The gentleman, by this, had all left their seats, and surrounded us, to interpose: but Cicil's voice, rising above the noise and confusion, perhaps purposely increased to drown it; he bellowed out, in sounds that struck an awful terror to my heart—"

" Lady Helena Melcome! Lady—"

" Villain! infamous, lying villain!"

" And, before they could prevent my lifted hand, I hit him a violent slap on the face.—All now was horrid uproar; Cicil and I calling, with equal vociferation, for swords, pistols—any implements of vengeance—death—And all the others endeavouring to prevent immediate mischief. As to a consequent duel, they could not attempt; though Mr. Galloper once hinted at an accommodation, by Cicil's begging pardon, for his blasphemy, and owning it the mad effects of disappointed love, and madning jealousy. This only enraged his pride the more, while I with equal vehemence declared,—this should not now avail him."

" We were at length separated for a few hours

hours, whose tedious moments were shortened by writing to my love a last adieu, if Heaven had willed my fall."

" Sir James received my challenge, that called him to the ground, where I should wait, with choice of weapons, to receive him :—he came immediately, observing,

" My note had just prevented him."

" The ground was soon marked out.—Cicil preferred pistols, and—"

Here Sir William was interrupted—I had with difficulty supported myself from the time he talked of writing " his last adieu," at such an awful moment : and now—it seemed as if I heard the pistol, and saw the agonizing wound—his blood streaming to my feet—my Barville falling for me ! and at the same instant, all my injurious conclusions, and the hard treatment (ungrateful wretch !) that so added to the pains he bore for me—and in such a cause—a quarrel my misconduct had brought on him—All rushed together on me—and, as he said Sir James took up the pistol, thinking I saw the fatal bullet flying to the dear bosom I adored ; I screamed, and caught his arm, as I threw myself before him, to guard the life my folly should not have exposed.

It was some time after my coming to myself, ere he could convince me the mischief was all over, and the wound a slight one ; or that I could attend to the sequel.

In short, Sir James's first fire (God be praised) missed him : Barville's ball passed through

through his adversary's side—the seconds interposed—but the *heroic* Cicil would load again, declaring he was not hurt, and then gave the fatal wound; the bullet, entering the wrist, lodged in the arm. Yet the implacable wretch was not satisfied; but, fortunately, as Sir William was going to fire with his left hand, Cicil, no longer able to sustain his sinking frame, fell, and as he fainted, cried,

“ Forgive me, Helena! Forgive what love alone—”

And 'twas long before he was restored to life. His wound was at first doubtful, but, blest be heaven! he is now in a fair way.

The ball was easily extracted from Barville's arm: he will not confess the anguish; but what must the dear fellow have endured! O, had I known—cruel to leave me in ignorance that exposed me to such trials, when he knew so well I never was formed for supporting them.

And now you ask me, Mira, what are my reflections on this strange affair? Forgive me, Mira—forgive me but this once, and such are my reflections, that I dare promise you my reformation.

Now do not laugh—Laugh? alas! I rather fear—But, if you knew how I have suffered—from every circumstance, from almost every word, respecting this dreadful duel, you'd own my punishment equalled even my fault.

Sir

Sir William, though he declared himself much better after what he called the cordial of my forgiveness, was so much fatigued by sitting up, and so much talking, (unthinking Helena! will you never be wise?) was obliged to go again to bed. His fever still continues, but the peace of mind he now enjoys (Heavens! could it be I that disturbed it!) will soon restore his health.

A message from Lady Eglington—I wonder we have not yet seen her! She is well, and begs to see me quickly—I fly, but will first close this second monstrous epistle: if the dark hue of my ink changes to scarlet, ere you receive them, be not astonished—The blushes of Helena did it! Once more forgive your friend: and she will not “ continue to add to the plagues of caprice, the teasing effects of continual repentings.”

LETTER XLI.

Sir Charles Eglington to Miss Eglington.

IF the changes of life, my Mira, are so varied, so rapid, and the good at best so chequered with ill, that the meanest observer must fear while he enjoys; there can be little danger that a mind like yours should be surprised by any of its fluctuating scenes, or meet unguarded those pointed shafts that, flying

from

from all directions, erring mortals think are shot at random—yet few can support the lightest frowns of Fortune, though chased by her brightest smiles: blessings we conclude our due, and grasp them as our own of right; while crosses are intruders 'tis ever hard to yield to.

Yet let not the rigid philosopher declaim, and falsely call that virtue which is but the effect of apathy and pride: our passions are the springs that still lead us to her goal, and their impulse once deadened, because we do not feel, or will not own the loss, we think we have gained the conquest: while those whose more active principles impel them on, possessing, with minds however superior, hearts tuned to sensibility must, even while they rise above the stings of misfortune, most feel the pang. 'Tis not by a violent opposition, affection can be conquered: Nature will exact her rights, spite of stern pride, that calls that sensibility weakness, which, properly directed, leads to virtue. Though they cannot be subdued, our passions, when swayed by reason, soften and sooth the very sensations they before more keenly nerved. That were indeed a narrow heart that, for a friend, would not resign a good it valued, and, however it felt the deprivation, received not consolation from the sweet flow imparted by benevolence.

If, then, the liberal mind cheerfully yields a benefit its own frail hand distributes; how should it bow to that unerring Power that, from

from one partial check, directs a thousand springs to universal good! Who shall dare explore the way of Providence! or trace the springs from whence its general blessings are directed! For that, however the selfish mind may doubt, is still by Providence intended.

When aspiring mortals eagerly grasp at bliss, already seize, and believe it all their own; then—if then the cup is dashed, Mira—it is not lost for ever—Heaven still directs it, thro' other courses, to gather, as on it flows!

I am not preparing you, my love—but seeking myself consolation from the same reflections you will make, when the circumstance that gave them rise, shall be known to you No—my darling; the virtues that so eminently distinguish you, are not permitted, by him who formed your heart for their reception, to pass unexercised. What your feelings must be, the breast whose heavings, as I write, scarcely allow my trembling hand to mark the paper—bursts with anguish but to think of—Grandby—Grandby—is unworthy of Mira!—O my child!—

LETTER XLII.

Miss Eglington, to Sir Charles Eglington.

GRANDBY—unworthy Mira!—Who dares—Ha! 'tis my father says it. O, that it were another! then it might be aspersed

perfon—Yet—O, Sir! perhaps, you have been deceived—Calumny may have attempted even your ear—but had never been attended to—had never changed your sentiments—but by conviction. Ah, no! my father would not have plunged the dagger in my heart, but to save me from greater ills.—Why then Grandby's un—Can it be possible!—I will—I will bend—I will try—But, oh my father! recall—I beseech you, recall your fainting child to your bosom: she is sick of this noisy, giddy scene. Let her, once more, seek repose where she ever used to meet it.

And does that dear breast feel such anguish—anguish for me! And I so far away—O let me fly, and soothe—yes: I'll forget my own—if you'll be—my father! for Heaven's sake let me not see you suffer, or I am doubly stabbed. Indeed—indeed I will deserve—I will endeavour—When the surprise—so sudden! so unexpected! so wonderful!—When reflection is restored me—When Heaven enables me to bear the stroke it wills me to receive, just as I thought it could not add one blessing more on earth—Its will be done! But, O my father! while I bow, I need all your support: let me be but restored to your paternal arms (I'm here alone—the world is empty round me), and I cannot be quite unhappy.

LETTER XLIII.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

HOW does my child! my Mira—the best—the loveliest—most injured Angel! Does she not too sensibly feel? Is she alive! O my friend! What a world! How shall we live in it, if friendship makes its way into our hearts, only to wound us the deeper! Grandby! he whom we believed Virtue's peculiar favourite! Grandby, distinguished by sincerity, goodness, and truth, no less than by every personal advantage! Every—Why do I dwell—you knew—you thought you knew—you, too, have been deceived!

A few evenings since, while the fond parents were, as usual, entertaining themselves with the favourite theme—the plans of future happiness, when their children should return from the busy scenes they had wished them to behold, left Imagination ever-magnifying optic might also too highly colour, what beheld in their real light, truth would reduce to proper estimation; Sir Charles received a letter, of which the following is a copy.

“ Though a real friend to virtue, and an enemy to hypocrisy, now wishs to engage attention; deception in addresses of this kind is so frequent, and so often the product of envy, malice, or despair, that I should not wonder if this, at the first glance, should

raise suspicion, or excite a contemptuous smile; especially as it tends to overthrow favourite opinions, confidence, and expected happiness.—In short, when it attacks—(Why should I hesitate at truth?) the character of Mr. Grandby.—Sir, you may start from the idea; and think, with many other superior minds, that suspicion should never taint the noble bosom; and that to doubt one moment the worth you have so long confessed, on the mere report of an informer, without even a name to support him, would be to injure: but, if the generous friend recoils, the prudent father sure should pause.—Sir Charles, I have seen your daughter.—To say I admire, wish her well, and such common-place assertions, were superfluous.—By chance I picked up the inclosed letter, which fell from Mr. Grandby's pocket-book, as he was turning over some papers. I knew of his engagement to Miss Eglington, and had heard of something more; my suspicions excused my curiosity—'Twas a woman's hand ('twas not Miss Eglington's) and my enquiries confirmed their foundation.

The lady, Sir, is called Mrs. Willows, and, with her infant son, lodges at a farmhouse in Oxfordshire. She was placed there by Mr. Grandby, when at college, and there he has continued her ever since; though he has not lately visited her so frequently as he used to do, which, no doubt, (among other circum-

circumstances) occasioned the complaining lines inclosed.

If, Sir, on enquiry (for I presume you will not intirely neglect this information) you have reason to think yourself in the least indebted to the author, of this timely advice, I have to request, as the only return by which you can oblige me, that you will conceal the knowledge of the circumstance, and the means of discovery, from Mr. Grandby. But if you are not fully satisfied, you have my free consent to show him this letter; and, if he has been injured by its insinuation, let him punish, as he will most justly deserve, the writer.

A COSMOPOLITE."

Now read the letter inclosed in the above.

I just learn Mr. Grandby is setting out for Oxfordshire.

" O Grandby! What horrid reports have pervaded even the obscure in which the wretched Sophia has so long concealed her story! Reports, that too well explain the fearful silence that preceded the storm now bursting on my head. On mine! ah, that were nothing—soon would that find, in death repose: but, O my babe! my babe! If, indeed, thy father—I cannot—the very apprehension bears me down to earth. O Grandby! my friend—lover—husband!—the only friend the poor Sophia found, when cast on a strange, a lonely world, a desolate orphan—when even—But what availed it that, in the hour of misery,

I found, in my Grandby found, all, and more than I had lost; if now he is torn away from me, and, (worse than the solitude I knew before) with my unhappy child, again I am to wander, a stranger in the world!"

Edmond—my only friend—If, indeed, you ever felt the woes of the poor Sophia—by that compassion, which, at the time of her deep distress, and ever since, has so distinguished your behaviour to her; by all your past affection for her little Edmond, she implores you not to keep her longer in suspense. Let her know the worst—in pity tell her all—and she'll endeavour to resign. But the continuance of this cruel silence—this terrible evasion, will, instead of preparing—of reconciling by degrees, but add to the inevitable blow!"

" How dark your letters ! Ah, Grandby—yet how clear the inference ! Sir George, too—not all his natural or assumed gaiety could conceal the secret lurking in his bosom.—Dear Grandby, could I but see you—could you but spare one moment to me—I would not encroach—but, even love (if what I hear about Miss Eglington is true) might spare me that : nor can a new engagement, with all its novel charms, cancel what compassion, at least at such an hour, renders due to your almost heart-broken

SOPHIA."

These strange letters, though they surprised, did not at first much alarm us. Our Grandby unworthy ! Grandby to be thus addressed,

by

by a woman whose interests in him could warrant such a letter! Impossible! He never saw it: 'twas never intended for his perusal. The very request to keep it from him, proved its fallacy. 'Twas the ridiculous attempt of some infatuated, disappointed rival—some Blandon—and Sir Charles was going to throw it in the fire, with the contempt so invidious a design deserved.—Yet 'twas a bold step—What man were mad enough to dare a thing, liable to such immediate detection, if—in short, the more we considered, the more we were astonished, and perplexed; and, however unshaken our opinion of Mr. Grandby remained, justice to our child, justice to ourselves, and justice to Mr. Grandby too, demanded some attention to an affair so interesting to all.

To a very worthy and particular friend, on the spot the anonymous writer directed to, Sir Charles addressed himself, for every information his most earnest inquiries and vigilant attention could procure. What his success has been, his letter, which I inclose, will evince. Grandby! who could have believed it!

LETTER XLIV.

Gilbert Mordant, Esq. to Sir Charles Eglington.

A NY request with which Sir Charles Eglington honours me, it will be my particular wish to fulfil; but, one of so impor-

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L E T T E R XLIV.

Gilbert Mordant, Esq. to Sir Charles Eglington.

ANY request with which Sir Charles Eglington honours me, it will be my particular wish to fulfil; but, one of so impor-

tant a nature, and so earnestly enforced, must call out all my endeavours to render the desired information as full and satisfactory as possible.

I soon found out Mrs. Willows, who lodges with the widow of an Irish farmer, I had formerly had some dealings with. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy immediately recollect^{ed} me, but looked serious, and seemed a little confused by my inquiries.

"Indeed, Sir," (said she, in an accent still all her own) "it is not my fault at all; I have long feared all was not as it should be, and now your curiosity confirms my suspicions. Pray, Sir, what do you know about Mrs. Willows? for, though she is the sweetest creature in the world, and though so strongly recommended too, by the pleasantest young gentleman I ever looked on, one would not desire, Sir, you know, to have improper people about one's house. But, the Lord save us all! there's no knowing the good from the bad in this comical country."

I told her I came not to impart, but to receive information; and, after some preliminary conversation, I had the success to engage her confidence, and to obtain much important intelligence: but, as it will be impossible to glean this from the extraneous matter with which it was jumbled, (perhaps) without loss; you must have patience to submit to the strangest, though honest circumlocution I ever attended to, however far it may lead you.

"Why

" Why then you must know, Sir, that, after my poor dear husband (God rest his soul!) died, my sons, instead of going on with the farm, and dying honest men, as their father did before them, thought proper to rake and scrape all they could together, and go beyond seas, to America, to the wars, and die gentlemen for the king: though, as 'Squire Bulfinch told them, they would make the King richer by improving his lands at home, than by wasting his lands abroad: which, you know, Sir, was a very wise saying.—And so, Sir, (as I was going to tell you) my sons both died over the wide seas, in America, which they conquered, for their King, as long as they lived, and all for nothing too.—God bless the Minister, for they say he was very generous—(he is my countryman, Sir)—and gave away what was lost, with both hands."

A little more to the point, if you please, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy; we'll talk politics another time; I'm in a hurry now, and—

" Politics! O God forbid, Sir! I can't abide politics; 'tis all along of politics that turned my poor sons gentlemen, and turned their heads, when they changed their pruning knives to scalping ones, as 'Squire Bulfinch told them, Sir: it would do your good heart good to hear him rave against the war, and politics: he ha'n't the soul (good man) to kill any thing but partridges and hares: and that, you know, Sir, is all in sport; for he'd as lief drink four ale as pursue (good

Christian that he is) an enemy in malice, to provoke him, though all the French were landing in his turnip-fields: and the French, they say, are as fond of vegetables as of potatoes themselves.—But my poor sons—”

“ But your sons, Madam, are now dead, and buried—Pray inform me—

“ How can you be sure of that, Sir? when, after all their dying for their King, none of the generals ever informed me if ever they were waked after their deaths, much less of their burials. And more’s the pity they died at all; for, when I could not go on with the farm, ‘Squire Bulfinch was forced (Heaven reward his honour) when he took away the lease, to leave me the house (which is a very pretty one, you see, Sir) and advised me to take in lodging-gentlefolks, from London, who come down in summer, to breathe air for their healths, and walk on their own feet for exercise. But he warned me to be very careful who came; for his honour (he is very knowing, Sir) observed (in confidence, to be sure, for he is a wonderful polite gentleman, and has kissed the King’s hand), so he told me that, though London was large, fine place, there were a few in it of not very scrupulous characters. And so, if I was so unfortunate (as ill luck would have it) to fall in a mishap about this young lady, (God bless her, for all, for she is an angel!—Alas, Sir, we are all mortality!) you see the over-

ight

fight was neither owing to the 'Squire, or to me : but we are, the clearest of us, (Heaven preserve us) apt to hit on impositions in this world. Now, Sir, you must know, young 'Squire Grandby (who is such another gentleman as you will not see in a summer's day), while he was at the university, studying learning (which, they say, he swallowed down like a keeler of butter-milk), visited very often at 'Squire Bulfinch's; for his honour loved him as his own son, because he used to hunt with him as if he did not care whether he broke his neck or not : and Madam, and the young Misses too, were wondrous civil to him ; for, after the hunt, instead of drinking, and falling asleep with the rest of the 'Squires, he would dance with the ladies, and draw mighty pretty little patterns, to sprig their borders with. Indeed, they say, not one of them, with all their power of money, but would jump to catch at him any day of their lives ; but yet they are no more to compare with the pretty creature he brought here, than a milk-pail to a china bason ; though the least of them would make half a dozen of her. Why, then, (though I say it) young Mr. Grandby, whenever he met me at the great house, or any where else, had ever some mighty pleasant thing or other to say to me ; and, had I been one of Madam Bulfinch's own wet-nurses themselves, he could not have been more familiar, or converfable :

had you heard him talk, you would swear you were reading in a book all the while : and then he would mimic the brogue like an Irishman himself—so you may think, Sir, what a dear, good, hospitable gentleman I mistook him for. Things now quickly went on this way by degrees, when, all of a sudden, he came one morning, and asked me so many questions about my house, and lodgers, that I had a mighty great suspicion he had some design that way himself, and, for once, I was right ; for, finding my rooms empty, he engaged them all, (as he said) for a young lady, whom, at that time, (and 'tis now two years ago come the first of next month) he called Miss Willows ; who, he told me, was an orphan of very good character (God bless her) and family ; but who had no friends in England, but a few relations who were no friends at all ; for they had left her to want, in a strange country. But no matter ; Heaven, for all that, would not let her want ; for she would soon be married to a fine young gentleman, a friend of his, who, though he had not now any great matter, would soon do very well ; for he was fighting his way in the world, through America ; and after that was coming homie, with a great fortune, to marry her. Why, then, when he talked of America, I was going to cry out, at once, only I was loath to dishearten her (as you know, Sir, he might tell her,) because it put me in head

of my poor boys: and who could tell a word of the matter, but her gentleman might fight his way, the same road that mine did? The Lord give her patience. When Miss Willows came, I thought her too pretty to be good-natured, for all the handsome ones in this country turn up their noses, as if they smelled stinking turf; saving your honour's presence: indeed, then, she was as sweet-tempered, as if ever so ugly—but no: ugliness makes them cross too; but she was as good as if neither one thing or t'other. And then for charity—The poor never saw her, but they blessed her; and she would eomfort, as well as relieve them; for she knew not what pride was: and her ways to me—O she was my pet—I loved her in my heart, and I pitied her too, because I knew what it was to be a stranger in a strange country—and I am sure when first I set foot on it myself, the people, whenever I spoke, stared as if seven heads were coming out of my mouth, and I wore them all myself. Well, Mr. Grandby, to do him justice, was very fond of her, and used to see her almost every day: but she never saw any one else; for they said she must hide from all the world, till the gentleman came, or her friends would take her away from him. I thought this mighty odd, to be sure; for if they would not take care of her themselves, sure they ought to be obliged to any one that would. But some folks don't know what they would.

would have.—Now, Sir, comes the worst part of the story; for, not long after, Miss Willows began to look very foolish; and to own the truth, Mr. Grandby began to look very foolish too, not to say serious. At last, says he, one day, after a good deal of pains, for (no offence to him) he is a pure bashful young man, and he blushed as he spoke,—Well, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy (says he) we have tried to keep a secret from you, but in vain—you must soon find it out, so we may as well tell you. Miss Willows was married to the officer you heard of not long before he left England, and her situation—And then he blushed again—for all the world as if 'twas any fault of his. So I began to smell a rat, you know, Sir: but, how he manages, I cannot tell you: Mr. Grandby does all the harm he pleases, and no one can blame him; and, though I did not half like it, he looked so good, and then his bright eyes glistened so—had I been hanged I could not say a word afterwards. He then desired me to be very careful of *Mrs.* Willows (as he now called her), and gave me money to provide every thing necessary; and to be sure, had he been young master's own dada, he could not have been more overjoyed when he was born, nor happier as the sweet pet thrived every day. Indeed these young dadas (if he is indeed a dada) make a wonderful fuss at first; but afterwards they make no more account of Christian children, than if they were so many young kittens born.

Why,

Why, then, no one indeed could help seeing the likeness, the moment it appeared ; and Master, (the Lord bless the pet, 'tis the sweetest child !) now he is near two years old, is as much the moral of his dada, as if his own lawful son. He gave him his own name too, but that was only because he stood godfather, you know, Sir."

Near two years old, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy ! and the officer not yet returned ? Why the war—

" Ah, Sir ; Madam was expecting him every day, for a long time, but yet was never the nearer ; but she was not very uneasy neither ; though he never came, till very lately, and now she is so altered—and so puny—so melancholy ! It goes to my heart to see her ; for, I care not who knows it, I love her as my own child. But—yet I fear, for all—"

Pray go on, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy. What do you fear ?

" Why, then, I fear, for all Mr. Grandby's so good (begging his pardon—God bless him), he's no better than he should be. When he was here, he used to come or send every day to see the lady, and his darling little pet ; but, no sooner did he leave the place, than he never came near it. I could perceive before, too, he always looked silly, and somehow disheartened, when I'd smile, and tell him, Master Edmond was as like his own god-dada, as if spit out of his mouth ;

but

but for all he did not like it, he would look at the child as if he loved him the better for it; though, after his father died, and he was a great 'Squire, he went on forgetting it. Yet he writes sometimes; and one of his particular cronies, who is now in those parts, improving a very great estate, he is every day running out—God bless him—He's a pure wild spark, and not a handsome girl can pass him, but he tells her so, without ever saying a word of the matter. Why, then, Sir George Lovemore comes very often, and tries to put young Madam in better spirits. Oh, 'twould make you, Sir, or any dog, die with laughing to hear him, he chatters so like a magpie. Yet I know not how 'tis, though the lady is always glad to see him, because he brings her news of Mr. Grandby; the more sprightly he is, the more melancholy it makes her. Now I suspect, though she was afraid of hearing some bad news, she was told of it before; yet, whatever it was, it never came till a few weeks ago, when I came home from 'Squire Bulfinch's, where I had been to give Madam joy on the 'Squire's breaking his leg, in leaping a ditch (for the Lord save us, it might as well have been his neck, you know, Sir). I found the poor soul in such strong fits, that three or four of us could scarcely hold her. She afterwards talked very wildly, and said something about her lost Grandby—and marriage, and husband, and child; and so, because I could not

not understand it, the waiting-maid turned me out of the room, for fear such pitiful words would make me take on, as she knew I doated on her lady, as much as she did herself: but, when Mrs. Diana thought her going into another fit, she was glad enough to call me back, while she run out for something. But Mrs. Willows did not then lose her senses, though she still talked wildly about Grandby, her dear lost Grandby, the father of her helpless infant: and so, not using me with any more ceremony than if I had not been in the room, (she loves me like her own fucking mother, Sir) she went on, telling all her secrets. After this, she takes a mighty little picture from her bosom, then kissed, and cried over it: so I thought, to be sure, it must be some good saint's, till peeping over her shoulder, it was like Mr. Grandby, when first I saw him at the 'Squire's with his fine brown curls over his face, as two peas. When she was tired of looking on the picture (and faith I thought she'd never leave it), she took a letter from her pocket-book, and going on the same way with that, she called it—" O thou first dear treasure the poor Sophia ever received—" and such things: and sure she would have gone on till now; but, hearing Mrs. Diana on the stairs, she was frightened, and getting fast into another fit, she had like to have torn the letter to pieces; but, thinking better of it, tossed it behind her, where I was standing. I picked it

it up, and put it in my pocket, intending to return it when Mrs. Dy was gone, supposing she wanted to hide it from her; but forgot it; and, two or three days after, when it was inquired for, was forced to deny it, fearing they might think I was reading it all the while; though, to be sure, the poor gentleman, when he wrote it, must have been in stericks too, for, God knows, I could not get a word of it."

Finding she still possessed the letter, I begged Mrs. O'Shaughnessy to let me have it; but, for a long time, she persisted in denying me.

"O dear, Sir! I now see, indeed, what you want. You would have something to carry before the justice: O then, for all 'Squire Bulfinch's meadows I would not hurt a hair of their heads. Oh, my own sweet pet! What if they went to swear away its life, because they know not how it came by it. You can't, Sir, swear it was born, because I told you so; but if you had paper to show, you could prove it, for there's no saying against black and white, I know, as well as you do."

I gave her the most solemn promise it should never appear in any court, nor any way injure either her little pet, or its mother; yet 'twas with the greatest difficulty I obtained the desired paper, which I shall inclose for your further satisfaction. Just as I was taking my leave, a knocking at the outward door roused

roused Mrs. O'Shaughnessy from the reverie the apprehended consequences of my going off with the letter, had thrown her into.

"The Lord save us all!" said she, looking through the blind—('twas a moon-light night)—"Talk of the Devil—O, Saint Patrick! If here is not Mr. Grandby, or his Fetch coming himself to murder me, about that paper."

I took advantage of her consternation, and begged her to conceal me.

"Run in quickly," (cried the good woman, almost out of breath) "into the room on the left hand; Mrs. Willows, herself, is sitting on the other side."

This was what I wanted, and I just got to my quarters as Mr. Grandby followed me up the stairs; his impatience not allowing the maid time to prepare her mistress for his reception.

I crossed the passage as he entered the room, without being seen, as all was darkness but where they were.

"Sophia! My dearest Sophia!" (cried Mr. Grandby, as he hastened to the lady, flinging the door, but not with force sufficient to close it quite.)

"Grandby! O, are you then come at last!"

And she seemed fainting, for he intreated her to be composed, with the most tender accents of affection. The child was standing on that part of the floor I could see: Mr. Grandby snatched it up, with transport press-ed

ed it to his breast, and several times wiped his eyes while he caressed the infant. The lady's sobs now called him to the other end of the apartment: as they spoke low, and were at the farthest end of the room, I could now hear very little, and the lady's voice was almost drowned by her affliction: Mr. Grandby's, too, faltered much: he seemed greatly affected.

" Sophia—for heaven's sake consider—if you have reason, what will avail—"

" If I have reason!—You know—you cannot deny I have.—Keep me not longer in suspense, I beseech you."

Here he said something, but with so many pauses, and in such broken tones, 'twas impossible to gather three words: but, whatever it was, it had a dreadful effect on her—She screamed out, in an agony—

" O God! then 'tis all over! Not a hope now remains—Perfidious monster! Cruel, impious villainy! O Grandby! Grandby! can it be—Are you indeed—"

Here, I suppose, she fainted; Mr. Grandby calling out, and, soon after, ringing the bell with violence. I thought it now most prudent to make a precipitate retreat; and got out of the house without observation.

The next morning I learned, from the good old woman, that Mrs. Willows had been very ill, and Mr. Grandby much agitated by her sufferings.

" I am

" I am very sure, though," (said she) 'tis all his own fault, for all : after you were gone, last night, he went into the very room you left, and cried like an infant ; for the dear creature is now fifty times worse than before he came. I wish he had staid away ; to break her heart so, whatever he said to her. Yet I dare not tell him a piece of my mind ; for, with all his sweet temper, he can be hot as salamander when he's vexed. Lord ! sure I shall never forget the quandary he was in last election for our gentlemen members, though with one of his own side, and own friends, who beat a boy for crying out——for ever : the lad, he said, was an English lad, and had a right to cry out, Devil for ever ! if he chose it. Lord, Sir ! you don't know what a big wig Mr. Grandby is."

The little Edmond was with Mrs. O'Shaughnessy : the good creature's evident attachment to her *pet* affected me ; and none of her carefesses seemed lost on him : he is, indeed, a lovely child ; and, as she had observed, as like Mr. Grandby (whom I had often seen at the university) as any son at such an age can resemble a father.

Mr. Grandby is now with his friend, Sir George Lovemore, who, as Mrs. O'Shaughnessy hinted, is rather wild and extravagant ; yet, notwithstanding, possesses many good qualities, and a most benevolent heart. He generally attends Mr. Grandby in his visits

to

to the farm-house; but, I hear, sets off for Bath, as soon as his friend leaves the country.

Thus, my dear Sir, I have fulfilled, as far as within my power, the task you have assigned me. If, in the listening scene, I have deviated from propriety, the nature of the circumstances that led to the action, will, I hope, excuse me.

If I chance to hear any thing further worthy your attention, you may depend on my immediately imparting it to you: and I sincerely wish the intelligence I now transmit, if not agreeable to your desires, may at least be serviceable in the direction of your conduct, on this very trying occasion.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,

G. MORDANT,

L E T T E R X L V.

Directed to Miss Willows, alluded to in the preceding.

EVER blest be the auspicious hour, when yesterday's fun witnessed the soft confession, which my sufferings drew from my Sophia's lips! My full heart—how shall it ever merit the transports it now feels! Sophia—my own Sophia—not years of grateful love can repay the obligation. Why does my cruel situation

situation impede our immediate union? The moment that sees me master of myself, shall seal the truth I have already sworn, and that for ever binds me to my loved Sophia.

O, my sweet girl! mean while, let not another—no, no: I will not fear it, since yesterday gave me life and hope together: yet, should the dear sentiments you have owned, be but the suffusions of a too-grateful heart, for the trifling services 'twas my chance to render you—Sophia—that thought half checks my happiness—I will owe nothing but to love: and if ever you have reason to lament the mistake that fetters your honour, Sophia, from that moment you are free. But I am bound for ever your devoted

E. GRANDBY.

LETTER XLVI.

Lady Eglington, in Continuation.

YOU have now before you, my dear friend, all the particulars we can gather relating to this shocking affair, and the villainous imposition designed us by the specious impostor we have so long harboured in our bosoms; more than sufficient, surely, to condemn him and to excuse our treating him with the severity he justly deserves.

Grandby's hand-writing (were further proof necessary) may be easily traced through the characters

racters of the letter signed with his name, tho' now it is freer, and somewhat improved.

No wonder the injured, unhappy girl calls him her husband—Is he not bound to her by every tie of honour, and of faith? What though he was under age at the time (which, no doubt, he idly imagines frees his engagement) in the sight of Heaven it cannot. Mira (independent of compassion—of delicacy) dare not believe it, and her parents abhor the idea. I pretend not to doubt his affection for my daughter, notwithstanding the pity and remorse, the suffering mother of his child must raise in his conscious heart, whenever he sees her: but heavens! with, at best, a divided heart; with such claims on his honour, and freedom to attempt the affections and hand of a young lady of merit, family, and fortune—was an insolence, presumption, and cruelty, almost beyond belief. I know his feelings must have greatly suffered in the conflict, for he has naturally a mind—O Mrs. Boothby! how do habits hang about us, and how hard to shake them off, when time and inclination have made them part of ourselves! Grandby's naturally a noble mind! O never—never: or, in defiance of every temptation, he had dared misery, in every shape, ere he had dared to be a villain. And then to violate the protection he seems to have afforded an orphan—a stranger—a desolate wanderer—what aggravations!—Dear, dear girl—yet when I think of

of him—so accustomed to consider him in the most amiable lights alone; to twine him with every beloved idea of my heart—But I must not think of him at all—must cast him off—yes, however hard, must cast him off forever.

Ah! if I thus—Oh, my child! My Mira—Mrs. Boothby, say—where are we now to look for a resting-place, on which to recline the troubles of approaching age! Amelia never promised it—On Mira's happiness we built the downy nest of our own: a cruel storm now overthrows it for ever; for, notwithstanding all, we may yet hope from such a mind, her heart, though so soft and gentle, is not a light one, that changes with every changing circumstance. This unfortunate attachment was the growth of time: and the encouragement it has received from parents, on whose judgements she depended, has rooted it too deeply to be easily shaken. Alas! I fear (for I know her well) the resolution with which she'll make the noble effort, will tear along with Grandby's idea, the lovely life 'tis twined with. What a world! I must repeat; and what are all our best endeavours, if heaven smile not on them! When that decrees, I must not murmur—yet—when we tried to do all that care, affection, prudence could—And was it not our wish, when first Grandby approached, recommended by every shining appearance, was it not our wish that a mutual affection should attach them—while every oppor-

opportunity was concerted that brought them together? Dear girl! 'twas then our fondness betrayed thee: then, when we believed you formed for each other; when the deluded parents, presuming beyond the knowledge of its determination, in triumph cried "—This youth Heaven formed for Mira!" Yet let us seek consolation in the hope, that, if we contributed to the woes you now endure, we also assisted in forming you to bear them with fortitude and virtue.

You cannot conceive, my friend, the stab this disappointment to his favourite wish has given her father: as to Mira's feelings—though his soul bleeds for her present conflict, he thinks her equal to every thing: this he cannot bear a doubt of, and has not patience with even my fears.

He has been writing again to intreat her silence, as to the cause of Grandby's immediate dismissal. His own conscience will soon inform him—and how, with all his caution, could he hope a long concealment? But, whatever are his motives, you may believe our gratitude to the generous anonymous writer (a Cosmopolite indeed!) who has saved us from the snare prepared for us, must engage our wishes to oblige him. Would to Heaven we knew him, that we might pour our sincerest thanks before him.

The sweet child earnestly begs permission to return to us. Was there ever a wish of her heart we delighted not to comply with?

And

And now, when it needs every indulgence,
to reconcile its present wayward disposition,
'twould be cruel to refuse her.

You, my beloved friend, will on this occasion, I know, excuse her: but Amelia—how will she consent to leave town, in its present fullness of noise and entertainment? Yet, sure, she will not murmur to accompany a sister in such a moment—when all her tenderest affection will be wanting, to soothe, and lead her from her sorrows. I long to hear—And also how my Mira received the astonishing news of Grandby's—Good God! Is it not a dream! I scarce yet can believe it possible! How has your affection been once more tried! What an unpleasing task your's must have been to impart—O, my heart's treasure! and no pitying mother near, to receive on her bosom your tears—nor mingle hers! But your's, equally sympathising, supplied the place.

Heaven bless you all! and give my darling more constancy, than—

Adieu, my dear Mrs. Boothby:

LETTER XLVII.

Mrs. Boothby to Lady Eglington.

GOOD Heaven! What letters! What accounts! O the dear Mira—How shall I bear her silent woe? Or, when she recol-

lects herself—or observes my anguish; the sweet exertions that often fade away on her smiling cheek, while she attempts them? The angel-girl! If any thing could enable me to bear, with the least degree of patience, the now detested name of Grandby, 'twould be the temptation to which he was exposed—Yet the more devil he, to wish to injure so much excellence. And then the poor Sophia—notwithstanding her error, there's something so innocent and plaintive in her manner, as well as in the simple tribute of the honest Irishwoman's praise, that greatly attaches me to her interests. I wish, from my very soul, the fellow may be just to her at last, as well as to his own honour, and marry her, in the eye of all the world; in that of Heaven he has already done so. Yet I cannot help regretting that he was not at liberty, when he first saw Miss Eglington. Formed for each other! Oh! they seemed designed by the same hand divine, an emblem of its own perfection, to bless each other, and to improve, by their virtues, an admiring world! But yet how different—Why, why, will boys at such early times, be ever forming attachments, that, fluttering on the wings of youthful fancy only, will probably yield to reflection, and maturer reason; and which, however lightly they may be then considered, must, if they are not villains, fetter them all their lives?

When I received your first preparatory note,

note, enclosing one from Sir Charles to Miss Eglington, she was with her loved Lady Elmour: in my first surprise and agitation I sent for Amelia, from Lady Priscilla's, her constant companion: she immediately came, and alarmed by my looks, enquired, with more tender earnestness than I once believed her capable of possessing, the occasion,

“ Was I ill? or her parents? her sister? What was the matter?”

On acquainting her with the affair, I was ~~not~~ a little astonished at her behaviour: I had never seen so much feeling, so much passion in her temper before; and could no way account for it now. She actually resented the injury done to Grandby, by listening to a report, she would answer for it, had not the least foundation in truth: and she walked about the room, with an air of indignation the more surprising, as she had never approved of Grandby: but, 'twas now—

“ Poor Grandby! Dear sister—but you shall not be made unhappy by your indulgence to me. Who could have believed it! Good God! What lengths—”

This induced me to believe Amelia knew something more: I questioned her; but she assured me she knew nothing of the letter her father had received; yet added, with warmth—

“ Mrs. Boothby, depend upon it, 'tis all a shocking cheat.”

Though I had not yet received the promised particulars, your opinion against Mr.

Grandby seemed too decisive to leave any hopes of a mistake; and therefore I continued my design of preparing Miss Eglington for her father's letter, though against Amelia's intreaties, who wished to conceal it from her.

My heart ached when she knocked at the door—as she ran up stairs—I turned away my face, as she entered the room.—

“ My dear Mrs. Boothby, good news; Lady Elmour is better this evening: and I have a letter from Grandby: he returns the day after to-morrow.”

My flesh seemed to creep, as I cast a watry eye on the prattling innocent.

“ Good God! what ails you, Madam? My father—mother—”

Are both well, my love. I have just received letters—

“ Where are mine? Give me them—I know something—Perhaps Helena—”

None of your friends are ill:—upon my word they are not.—I own I have some disagreeable news for you, but not of the nature—

“ Thank God! Thank God! I was terrified almost to death—But if all are well in —shire—Grandby, too (I have just heard from him)—I am prepared for every thing else: so, you may tell me.”

The tears streamed down my face—I clasped her to my bosom: Amelia, too, kissed her hand as she held it, but with a look of vexation, mingled with concern.

This

This is too much—This suspense—For Heaven's sake relieve me—What news—

“ ‘Tis about Mr. Grandby—Can you bear the total wreck of all your interests there?—Can you resign—”

I paused—I could not proceed—she embraced me with transport.

“ O Mrs. Boothby! how could you frighten me so? What an opinion you must have of me, to make such a serious parade about nothing! Only I am so happy by the relief, I could chide you. Interests, indeed! What—I suppose his uncle is married? or has disinherited him, for a whim? or some such thing? Ah, how trifling (since my parents happily regard them not) are all such considerations, when weighed with Grandby's worth—with Grandby's love! Now I comprehend the reason of the melancholy that hung about him before he left town, and which appears thro' some parts of his letters. If my indifference at the cause, can reconcile him to the disappointment, the gloom shall soon be dissipated.”

“ You mistake me, my sweet young friend: the interests I alluded to, are of a far nearer nature. Exert all your fortitude to hear the truth; and may the contempt Grandby—”

“ Gracious Heaven! Contempt joined with Grandby's name! Not malice itself dare unite the sounds.”

“ Mira—he does not deserve—Another love—in Oxfordshire—”

" Oh, Madam! What strange powers have turned aside your ear to listen to some idle story, which falsehood has invented? Ha! ha! The fickle inconstant, no doubt, has proved a false knight—and, in three days absence, quite forgetting his peerless Dulcinea, has listed himself under the banner of some more fortunate damsel? and (recreant that he is) has dared to break the faith he owed his sovereign Lady, by—dancing with another? or praising, (kissing, perhaps) her lily hand! Oh, this is refining on Helena, truly!"

Generous girl! I could not awaken her sportive fancy from its delusive dream, myself, and cruelly gave her the letter that must end it.—She turned pale at the solemnity of my manner; but that was animation to the deadly hue that succeeded, as she read—yet she did read, till the last lines depriving her of every power, the paper fell from her lifeless hand.

" What fiend" (when she recovered) " has been here at work. But, O my father! how have you barbed the arrow with which you pierce my heart, by thus feeling the wound you make! What can it be—what can it mean, Mrs. Boothby? But, whence ever it comes, I'm sure 'tis a barbarous, an impious attempt, and an unavailing one too—yet—O my God! Is it not my father—"

" He has been deceived," (interrupted Amelia) " I am certain 'tis all a horrid mistake

take. Don't be uneasy, Mira: you'll soon see the truth will all come out, as I foretell: some ill-natured, meddling fool, has been jealous of Grandby, who made out a plausible, serious, religious tale, and Sir Charles, therefore, believes it. He'll find it all false though, in a day or two; and then will be vexed with himself for teasing you thus for nothing."

I could have beat the silly girl (now evidently actuated by a love of contradiction alone) for thus raising her sister's hopes, by shadows, which, though but shadows, despair is ever prone too readily to catch at; as poor Mira evinced, by the rapture with which she embraced and thanked her sister—her noble, generous sister—for not deserting her injured Grandby, when attacked by some lurking enemy, from whose malevolent insinuations not all his long-revealed and acknowledged virtues, could now defend or guard him: but the time would soon arrive, when her Grandby would drag the wretch to light, and punish, as he merited, the insidious assassin.

"I would instantly write," (she continued) "and hasten him to clear his aspersed fame; but, 'twould hurt him, as if I thought it needful."

Finding in the plenitude of confidence, and hopes, she was quickly loosing sight of her father's information, I thought it best (lest too much elated, she would but the more severely feel the certain reverse) to shew her your letter,

ter, which went further than her father's in the proofs relating to Grandby's deceptions proceedings, and your thorough conviction of his guilt. 'Twas now the sinking girl (notwithstanding Amelia's continued false lights) began to fear, to doubt, and at length, to lose the last faint glimmering of hope—with real satisfaction I received on my bosom, after an hour's stupefaction, the full flow of tears (Affliction's best relief) that eased for a while, her loaded heart. I then advised her retiring; that at least the lassitude of body, the fatigue of mind she had endured, had brought on her, might gain a little rest: for I knew she would need recruited strength, against the expected explanation to-morrow was to bring.

She said she wished to be alone, but would not go to bed till she had written a few lines to her too-sensibly afflicted father. Yes; she would venture to promise obedience to his desire—to deserve his love—she would fulfil her engagement, or die in the attempt.

O, my friend! What a night must she have passed! How heart-breaking the woe that traced her yet more softened features, in the morning! But, let me not alarm you: a mind so delicate, so feeling, so attached, will not easily regain its wonted harmony and strength. It must be a work of time: she must not be hurried, or teased by advice. Let but her agitated spirits subside, by their natural course, and assisted by the greatness of soul that so distinguishes

distinguishes this superior young lady, peace, I make no doubt, will, once more, possess her lovely bosom.

* * * *

I was perfectly astonished by the calm composure with which Miss Eglington listened to Mr. Mordant's accounts, and the added proofs Grandby's letter gave of his perfidy!

"Good Heaven!" (said she, raising her dove-like eyes) "that I, who would gladly have sacrificed my happiness for his, should have been the fatal cause of its overthrow! But for me his noble mind (though he has now so greatly erred) had never been tempted to deviate so far from its dictates. Who knows, Mrs. Boothby, but I, at first, ignorantly contributed to his defection from poor Miss Willows, by letting him see the partiality I felt for him. Ah, Grandby! had I known her prior claim, the guilty passion that pervaded my bosom had never sullied its spotless whiteness. But I resign you—Resign you!—I never had a right to your heart—it was another's ere we met—And Ch! by restoring the wanderer to its original possessor, may you at once atone, by all the justice now within your power, your offence; bless, by your returning love, the mother of your child; and repair the injury to her, which Mira, on such condition, can forgive."

You see, dear Madam, (as I before observed) we have only to leave this mind to

its own workings, and have every thing to hope. She is now going to write to Mr. Grandby—she is equally above complainings and reproaches; but much regrets the necessity she is under, from your injunction, to forbear an intimation of the above wish, as the only one now near her heart.

“ A sweet consolation!” (says the angel)
“ shall I derive from the downfall of my once favourite expectations; if, from their death will spring the happiness of others. And I make no doubt but reflection will soon revive the virtues congenial to Mr. Grandby’s nature, which ’twas my misfortune for a while to smother in a breast where vice, not encouraged by success, cannot long find refidence.”

Amelia now finds she was quite out in her conjectures: what they could at first tend to, Heaven only knows; but this dear, inconsistent mad-cap, often perplexes me in the extreme. Once more she raves at Grandby—

“ How could Lady Priscilla ever think favourably of the wretch, or be for once so mistaken in human nature, of which, in general, she is so perfect a judge! Were she Mira, she would shew her contempt of him, by immediately giving her hand to one of her admirers: Lord Blandon, to be sure, as first in rank. What signified the little difference in their tastes, and tempers?—Her sister, in one summer, could teach him all the wonders

wonders of her raree-show closet—Or, if she thought Blandon too lumpish for any studies but those of the chace, or turf, and preferred a scholar; why, there was Mr. Breeze—sure he was a literary gentleman; a virtuoso too, who, after catching butterflies for the magic-lantern could make panygeric verses on the beauties it magnified, and elegies on their deaths.”

While Amelia thus runs on, with an air of importance, as if every word was worthy the deepest consideration, Mira regards her with an half-smile; her sweet face, bending over her shoulder, like a drooping flower.

If any thing would raise my apprehensions of her never conquering this unfortunate attachment, 'twould be the serenity with which she resigns to her disappointment. We see here no female petulancies, no impatient complainings at the hardship of her fortune; nor passionate reproaches, or reviling reflections on the author of her sufferings; nor yet bashfulness of behaviour, as if she felt shame from her disappointment.

The feelings of the heart soon evaporate by those violent ferments, to nothing: but, throughout Miss Eglington's conduct and expressions, dignity and calmness blend with delicacy, sensibility and candour.

I sounded Amelia, on her sister's inclination to return to the country.

“ Lord, Mrs. Boothby!” (she replied) “ that would be indulging her to her own harm

harm indeed! Let her put what face she will on it, I know she yet loves that insolent fellow, who has thus dared to affront a family so superior to his own, to the very bottom of her heart: and this very morning I caught her with all his letters, pictures, hair, and a whole pack of stuff beside, on a table before her—praying to them I suppose:—for she looked as solemn as, I remember, my grandmother used to do, whenever she went to church. Now, all Mira wants, is to do these pretty soft things, without interruption, in her favourite groves and bowers, where she will whine and pine over every spot where she and Grandby used to talk nonsense. Now didn't I always say 'twas nonsense, Madam? and you see how it turns out. If she continues in town, she cannot think of Grandby, if she would; for something or other will always be driving him from her head; and then, you know, he will the sooner be driven from her heart. I'm sure the last general fast-day, when there was nothing to do, I read in a page of philosophy I chanced to pick up, this very observation; so it cannot be contradicted, though it makes for my argument, which, in spite of all I can say, you will sometimes think a wrong one."

This pretty philosopher's idea, my Lady, however conveyed, is certainly not undeserving attention. Perhaps Miss Eglington herself, when she reflects, may listen to it; at least,

least, till the first impressions subside, and leave reason greater power over imagination, than it can yet possibly possess.

I then asked Amelia, if her sister persisted in going, whether she meant to accompany her? Mira, might at such a juncture, (I added) wish this proof of tenderness from her, and her parents would certainly expect it. Nor should my own interests, whate er they might whisper, be permitted to dissuade her from a conduct that duty and affection equally prompted. She started, coloured, hesitated—and looked not a little pleased at an interruption that relieved her from an answer she seemed at such a loss to make: she has continued ever since thoughtful and dull. Miss Eglington's letter will be delivered Mr. Grandby, at his lodgings; as soon as he arrives, and doubtless prevent his immediate visit.

Poor Grandby! I pity too—What strange powers, my Lady, does this young man possess of disarming Justice as she strikes! The more dangerous the subtle wiles, that, by throwing us off our guard, but the more securely insinuate their poison into our unsuspecting hearts.

May this cloud pass away, and happiness again smile on your dwelling.

LETTER XLVIII.

Miss Eglington to Edmond Grandby, Esq.

SIR,

I Most sincerely lament it was ever our misfortune to meet—at least that the event which now forbids our union, did not at first timely interpose, to bar that sympathy which so fatally attached our hearts.

As we must now forget each other, (and duty will facilitate the task) it is the fervent wish of my soul, never again to behold you: Grandby—see me no more.—And, since no power can alter my resolution, may no other consideration remain for me in your bosom, but what will prompt you to favour my desire.

MIRA EGLINTON.

LETTER XLIX.

Mr. Grandby to Miss Eglington.

MADAM,

AS no power can tear you from my heart, no duty but that of obeying your commands, can prompt my submission; and, as I can resign the most fervent wish of my soul, to the slightest of yours; Mira—I will see you no more.

GRANDBY.

L E T.

LETTER L.

Miss Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

YOU ask how it is with me, my friend? —As should one, after travelling thro' delightful ways, reposing on a flowery summit, till the next expected morn conducts him to the fields that already open enchantment to his raptured view, suddenly wake—not called from slumber by the balmy breath of morn, nor by the melody that lulled his senses, nor by the human voice, that, rising from below, had promised friendship, and social converse near; no:—but roused from his dream of continued bliss by the loud element's rude crash, he starts—dark night around him—and, while the tempest thunders over his defenceless head, vainly seeks, by the lightning's gleams, the prospects once so near:—then, far from the cheerful haunts of man, he wanders o'er the rugged, lengthening desert; alone, sad, solitary, slow—with-out one hope to cheer him on the way.—Thus 'tis with me Helena. And yet I must not lay me down—I must not tire—but exert my powers with the need; and go as Providence directs me.

As I sometimes, amid my visionary scenes of happiness, accustomed myself to meditate the “baseless fabric” on which all human happiness, at last, depends; I have often, while
my

my heart has twined itself round Grandby, (Ah, Helena!—that name, Helena! “ still ushered with a tear”) I have then in silence wondered, while my blood run cold at the thought, how I could resign him, should Heaven call him from me—Alas! I thought no human power could snatch—but he was never mine, Helena—And would I have usurped —ungenerously, guiltily—O! I must hasten to forget him, since I cannot, with innocence, think of him.—May he long live to atone for his error, by making another happy, as once—

But, had I lost him by the only event I believed could ever sever us, Helena, I had experienced a sweet consolation, now denied me. While I contemplated his virtues, to have resigned them to the Power that, seeing its own reflection in his breast, permitted not ought to linger below—had been a divine alleviation to my sorrows—Virtues, not then shaded as now, and with innocence, my love might have dwelt on every dear remembrance, as I calmly waited the union, no more to be dissolved. Nor had I then traced him only through the skies—but had sweetly mourned what yet of solitary life remained; at earliest dawn had gathered every flower, and strewed the earth that covered what remained of all I loved. My flowing tears for ever had preferred the green sod o'er his grave; and the birds, in plaintive notes, been taught to answer all my sighs, till even echo had repeated—“ He’s gone for ever.”

O, Helena!

O, Helena! what then had been the luxury of my woe! Yes, by the pale waning moon to have visited the dear, the sacred spot—and, while she threw a dubious, melancholy gleam through the murmuring boughs, as they waved over his grave—to fit, and repeat his praises to the wind; tell them how sweet were his looks, how gentle his words, how great his virtues, and how fond our love!—had this been wretchedness, my friend? O, no! it were perfect happiness to what I now feel; for then I had mourned him mine, and indulgence had been no crime.

Heavens! Is it then by Grandby's death—O life! what a poor thing art thou! and how deluding thy promises! If I, who but an hour ago had such reason to depend on thee, have, even while I believed I grasped the boon, so missed the airy promise, as to prefer, as a lesser evil, the tears I had shed over his grave, whom I have now lost for ever; fay, flattering bubble, who may depend on thee!

Instead, my Helena, of hugging remembrance to my bosom, I am now banished every thing that can recall it: I have already destroyed every letter, every line, I ever received: the dear shadow, too, that hung at my heart, and lay by me, on my pillow, as I slept; even the faded flower I once mentioned—all, all are gone for ever, with my—with Grandby.

Have

Have you any idea, Helena, how I felt when I saw all my treasure (treasure, a few hours before I had not taken worlds for) burning before me? All that yet remained of Grandby lessening, by degrees, as I gazed—and wept! All seemed over then, and—'tis hard, Helena—indeed it is. But this weakness must be conquered, since now it is a weakness, it must be conquered. Though my heart has for once indulged itself, (it softened as it first addressed you, in affliction, after so often pouring its tides of joy before you) no more shall it range at liberty over the delightful fields of retrospection Altho' its future prospects present no pleasing views; from duty, rectitude, and honour, it must derive its comforts, and (I trust) more substantial good.

I did not reply to your last letter—how could I? You call for my forgiveness, and promise that cruel error you so sensibly feel, shall be the last—if 'tis not, I shall lose all hope of you indeed! Ah, Helena!—but I check myself—often shall I wander, unless I keep the strictest guard over my thoughts.

We shall soon meet.—Will you not assist your poor Mira, in her arduous task? You must not indulge, or soothe her: you must not talk of Mr. Grandby: Oh, no—But, when resolution sickens, you must strengthen and lead her from the danger.—Heaven continue my Helena all her blessings.

L E T.

LETTER LI.

Miss Eglington to Lady Helena Melcome.

I CHARGE you, Helena—I charge you, by our friendship, not to think of it. What! can my affliction be mitigated by checking the happiness of my friends! Rather in their felicity let me forget my griefs. Yes: believe me, I shall more keenly feel them, if you do not immediately give up the childish idea (I do not receive it as a compliment) of deferring the celebration of your nuptials.

You cannot think of happiness (you say) while your Mira is bending under the weight of so cruel a stroke: how, my beloved creature, will that lighten it? And Sir William not only consents, without a murmur, but applauds you?

Generous Barville! Yet, Helena, I should be half angry with him for you, but for the certainty his acquiescence proceeds more from fear (strange girl that you are) than from conviction. If you do not retract his sentence, I shall conclude you jealous of the good opinion with which he now honours me, (from your own partial description too) and that you are determined he shall hate me heartily ere we meet.

My ever-generous parents consent to my request of returning home; and the good

Mrs

Mrs Boothby excuses my leaving her, though so much sooner than she expected: she would at first have dissuaded me from an apprehension solitude would not befriend the present situation of my mind, and my wishes to conquer it. But what calls the solitude? The uninterrupted society of my parents! of my Helena! While blest with that, can I have room for regrets? and then my books—my other long-neglected occupations—with what pleasure shall I return to them?

'Tis by continuing in this wild, solitary town, my ideas have more leisure to turn inward. What amusement to reflection can be expected from a crowded room, when, perhaps, not an object in it engages my attention? Is not this, in reality, solitude? And, for want of entertainment, will not the heart the sooner look round for its usual companion, and, missing him, feel more the mighty void? —a void that cannot be now filled (as once in little absences) by expectation, hope, and by a thousand loved ideas! If attention is reluctantly forced to the dancing shades about me (flitting in every wild direction), in spite of the dereliction from virtue an unfortunate passion for me once occasioned; will not comparisons of every other merit, or advantage, obtrude themselves on my fickened imagination? Yes, every graceful look, and motion, rises before me: the refined thought—the deep observation—the delicate idea, or humane

mane sentiment, yet sound in my ears; the sooner restored by the contraries I attempt to listen to, or observe. Then should Love again endeavour to affront me—O how disgusting! while, terrified, I fly the shocking words that tear my heart's inmost core!

Indeed, my Helena—were I not soon relieved from those irritating aggravations, my temper would certainly suffer too: failing, and disconcerted wherever I turn, I feel sometimes as ready to be vexed, or soured. Does not discontent directly militate against the resignation due to Heaven? Alas! if calm philosophy and religion forsake me, where—ah! where shall the aching bosom find relief! But, I do not despair—amid the rational scenes to which I am flying, my thoughts, after obeying the direction they with such pains were led to, will not be perpetually deranged, but will there meet with affliting guides to settle and support them. And then—if Grandby will but forget me—Ah, Helena! what he may suffer (however he deserves) will sometimes wring my heart—but, if he is recalled to peace by recollection, and acts as I trust he will from his noble disposition act; then peace will also dispel the gloom that now obscures her way, and Mira again be happy.

Amelia, since this affair, has been greatly agitated: I believe, in part, from her tenderness to me. This darling girl has naturally

rally a generous heart; but it does not appear to advantage under the load of fashionable affectation she suffers to disguise it. Whether she was alarmed by the apprehension of being recalled, with me to the country, or that she wished me not to leave her, she was for some time quite thoughtful and dejected; but on receiving a letter from my mother, she delighted me by a behaviour so different from what I expected.

Running into my room, with the tender lines that had awakened all her affection, with looks of the liveliest transport she embraced and wept over me.

“ Yes, my dearest sister—I will most readily accompany you. Did you not, in the hour of felicity, forsake it for me? and shall I now suffer you to return alone, when distress has taken its place in your breast? I am ready, my love—I am ready to set off, whenever you please, and shall regret nothing I leave for you.”

What rapture did I receive from this dear embrace, these tender expressions! I forgot every thing as I returned it, and wept my thanks on the sister-bosom whose estrangement I had so often lamented—while a new source of happiness and pleasure opened on me, from the change. Never did Amelia appear so lovely as throughout this day: the late gloom that had sat so awkwardly on her naturally brilliant features, gave place to her own

own vivacity, with the addition of the sweetest goodness and simplicity.

Mrs. Boothby was equally astonished and charmed, while Mr. Boothby declared he would not now consent to part with her.

" She was a malicious little witch, and concealed her best qualities till she was going to run away with them, that she might be the more regretted—No occasion for that though—he would have missed her sufficiently as it was. Who would entertain him now with making pretty faces as he smoaked his segar? Tell him returning nabobs should leave all the nasty Eastern customs behind them, and import nothing into their own country but money, for the good of the nation at elections? Or, who would now tread on his gouty toes; and, when he roared out with the pain, laugh at him, and say—'twas only the ghost of an Indian Prince, taking back his diamond buckles?"

Judge, my Lady, of our surprise and disappointment, when all our new-born hopes vanished with the setting sun!

Whether the evening's entertainment, or Lady Priscilla's wondrous influence worked the change; when Amelia returned from her, not a trace of the enchantment remained: all was again hurry of spirits, and sullen gloom; and, when I flew to receive her, she burst into tears; and, turning away from my embrace, cried—

" Let

Let me go, Mira—I do not merit your affection—forget me—I am not worthy of being your sister.'

She would not be soothed, thought I promised, if she wished to stay the winter out in town, I would endeavour to obtain our parents consent, to her remaining with Mrs. Boothby. She would listen to nothing, and shut herself up from us all the next day, but joined a large company, in the evening, at Lady Elmour's, who has conquered her dejection of spirits, but will not, I fear, so easily recover her health. My Lord wishes to accompany her to the South of France: she shocked me when, on his proposing it to her, she whispered me, with a smile of sweet serenity—

"Mira, I would do any thing to make him happy, while I remain with him: but 'tis all in vain. Believe me 'tis not the effect of insulted pride: but that fatal evening struck its blow sure, though the victim lingers."

Amelia, as my father enjoined, has not mentioned to any one (not even to Lady Priscilla) the cause of Mr. Grandby's dismission, which, I find, is generally believed to be owing to my father's disapprobation, as they were ignorant of his having ever been approved of by my family.

Lord Sedley took an opportunity last night of speaking apart to Mrs. Boothby: I guessed the

the subject, and know not, on his turning to the company, whether surprise, pleasure, or concern, was most conspicuous in his countenance. How different his behaviour from Lord Blandon's, Mr. Breeze's, and the rest of them. While they were more troublesome than ever, not once did he address himself to me: he scarcely looked at me the whole evening; and I could perceive his indignation rise, on the indelicate observation attempted to be drawn on me, more than once.

Why, Helena, did Lady Priscilla so frequently direct such looks of malicious pleasure at me? I know not how I have offended this polite lady, but her dislike to me is evident. Perhaps she knows I disapprove of her power over Amelia: I certainly wish it were less; but, though no favourite of mine, I ever treated her as the friend of my sister.

"I wonder" (cried her ladyship) "what's become of Mr. Grandby?"

"Gone to his proper element, the country, to mind his fields and cattle" (answered Lord Blandon). "What have the country gentlemen to do in town? unless the few who attend the House, a few days: and even those, for the good they do (unless when they sell us their votes), had better be selling their crops."

"It rather pervades my imagination," (said Mr. Breeze) "Mr. Grandby has retired not to plough his grounds, or rear his cattle, (as the keen potency of your Lordship's wit

supposes) but to waft his complaining sighs through the responsive murmurs of his sympathising groves and bowers."

"Lord! you queer creature—What do you mean?" (asked Lady Priscilla, affecting ignorance) "Miss Eglington, is not Mr. Grandby in town?"

"I really cannot tell, Madam: I have not seen him some time."

The simple Breeze, believing it real, relieved, in a whisper, the surprise and curiosity she called into her face on my reply.

Had you then seen, Helena, the looks of assumed compassion and pity she threw on me, in despite of indignation you had laughed. If she meant to mortify me, she lost her aim: I felt no other emotion but that of contempt, for a moment; and, without any of the embarrassment she evidently wished to raise, continued—

"If your Ladyship has any commands for Mr. Grandby, he may yet be in town."

"Who I, Madam! (colouring) I commands for Mr. Grandby, indeed! I wonder what you mean! He never was so great a favourite of mine, I assure you, as to be honoured with my commands! I rather was astonished at—at Miss Amelia's ever suffering his attendance in public, he appeared such a —so rusticated somehow—"

A smile I could not suppress, raised her colour, if not her passion; but Amelia, who had

had hitherto sat silent, seemingly lost in thought, now set it in a foam.

“ Lord ! how you forget, my Lady ! Didn’t you rave at me, for misrepresenting him so ? and say, he would be the sweetest fellow in the world, would he but let you polish him a little ? I’m sure I wondered at your taste when you praised him so violently.”

She could scarcely speak, Helena ; and actually trembled with rage.

“ Heavens, Amelia ! how your ignorance provokes me !—Because my politeness—my consideration to you, led me to—to falsify my sentiments, to reconcile your—your dislike—And so I wished, because I thought—” (casting on me a tremendous sort of smile) “ Well—catch me again by my good-nature to render my good taste liable to question.”

How Lord Sedley looked at her !

“ Well,” (cried Amelia) “ I’m glad I made the observation, however ; since it gave you a fair opportunity of clearing yourself so well : for had I imprudently mentioned your raptures, -when you were not present, to account for them—ignorant people might have mistaken, you know.—

“ Though no one but yourself could make such strange mistakes, I’m glad of it too, since something has roused you from your reverie at last. Really, Amelia, you sat moping before, like a poor girl who had just lost her lover.”

" I wish I could fortunately lose two," (looking peevishly at Captain Flowers, and Mr. Scott, an officer and clergyman—new followers in her train) " for they will not let me rest one moment, between them; though I've told them fifty times already, I'm not in a humour to be diverted at them to-night. Lord! how provoking, not to know when nonsense will, or will not be agreeable!"

" Would to Heaven I could divine, that I might oblige you!" (answered Flowers) for, as I never yield to a man, I ever make a point of doing so to a lady."—

" What! whether right or wrong?" (asked Mrs. Boothby.)

" Certainly, Madam: for, as the one never can convince me, so I never can convince the other. Thus, by fighting and submitting by turns, I make easy work of it, and end the matter at once."

" O Heavens protect me!" (screamed out Miss Tivolly) " let no one, I implore you all, as you pity the delicacy of my unfortunate frame, attempt to contradict him, in my presence."

" And that delicate frame, like the famed palladium of your sister-goddess, Madam, shall instantly soften and assuage the fury of my ire. Be not alarmed: I'm sometimes good-natured."—

" Now I wish to conquer by fair argument," (said Mr. Scott) " and the ladies, too, will like you the better for it; for, convinced,
on

or not convinced, the sex love a little argument, in their hearts: then 'tis no compliment to their understandings to suppose them unworthy of conviction."

" And you actually fight with every man who disagrees with you" (cried Mrs. Boothby): " well, I approve your spirit there, as much as I blame your humility on the other side."

" When one's way is known, Madam, 'tis seldom disputed; and, as to humility —that gentleman's coat, indeed, may work greater miracles" (surveying the clergyman's with scorn —his own with triumph; and looking at the ladies, as appealing to their decision): " but I seldom have reason to boast the—the influence of mine, to be sure! A soldier never boasts of victory, any way; or I'd give you a touch of my manner, in a hurry—But I hate to be my own trumpeter."

" O, pray, Sir," (said Mrs. Boothby) let's have the blast—I shall like it of all things—
A man speaks feelingly when

" Himself the hero of each mighty tale."

" Ay, ay, Madam," (added Breeze) those potent lungs of the noble Captain seemed formed to blow a mighty puff: and I too shall delight to hear—"

" And, Sir," (interrupting the starting little creature, with a thundering voice) " but for the guardian divinities around you, by Heaven, you should—do more, perhaps, than

hear me.—I ever condescend to puff!—But, Madam, (for I always obey the ladies)—when I was in Germany, last war, after a private ball, on the evening that the battle of Minden was fought—”

“ The battle of Minden! Ha! ha!—how long ago was that?”—

“ I was a mere boy, then, Madam—quite a baby.—A little fatigued with conquest, and quite knocked up with dancing; while we relaxed at table, chatting of battles, balls, politics, and the ladies; a violent altercation arose between two gentlemen, whether Æneas was the greater saint or devil. One maintained he was a saint, because he submitted his passions to the controul of the deities—the other a devil, because he first, with a pious, deceiving, parson-looking face, made his way into a lady’s heart, and then blew it up, like a bomb in a barrel of gun-powder.”

“ Now I should have coincided with the first opinion,” (cried Mr. Scott) and for this evident reason: because the poet intended him for a saint; and we should always take the will for the deed.”—

“ And I with the latter” (said Mr. Breeze): “ for to make such cruel havock in the cambric fabric of a lady’s delicate bosom, and then to say ‘twas by the command of Heaven, was not only being a devil, but a double devil; and a cowardly, as well as a shameless one too (he was a *soldier*, ladies); for he was ashamed

ashamed of his own crimes, and then had the impudence to charge them to the Gods!"

"Lord! how can you terrify me so by such horrid words?" (said Miss Tivolly). "Bombs! and gun-powder! and devils! Only feel how I tremble!"

"Don't be afraid, Madam—I'll protect you from them all.—Now observe how I managed; I insisted on it, let who would maintain the contrary, Æneas was neither saint or devil, yet was both."

"Did you, faith! (cried Lord Blandon) I'll bet the best racer in my stud, against your shoulder-knot, you don't prove it here: and, d—mn me, I had rather lose one of my legs than one of my horses. Do you take me up, Sir?"

"My Lord, I do not much approve of betting on my own words; it looks as if they could be disputed. And, when your Lordship hears the history of this shoulder-knot, you will not wonder at my estimating it beyond all the horses in the kingdom together: yet, for once, I'll wave—"

"O, my Lord," (cried Mrs. Boothby) don't bet—don't bet: you'll lose your horse; for, by the gentleman's face, I see he can prove any thing."

"Well, my Lord, I do not wish to win your horse, since he's a favourite, and the ladies forbid it: then 'tis not fair to wager on certainty."

" Though the conclusion is no way doubtful," (said Mr. Scott) " I own my curiosity raised, as to the manner of your handling it; and I always like to be convinced by fair argument."

" Why then, Sir, I'll convince you in a moment—

" Gentlemen," (said I) " I'll decide the affair for you, in a trice; for I was always as great a critic as soldier, and *vice versa*, and so value myself equally on those two talents. But remember, from my decision there's no appeal: for, as my head guides my hand, my hand supports my head. A critic, especially, should ever be a soldier; for he has to fight his way through all opposition, and to hew down all before him.—Now I prove you are both right, and both wrong; for Æneas was no saint, because he lived before 'twas the fashion to dub saints; and yet he was one, because he possessed all the virtues of a saint by intuition, as it were; and the spirit, not the name, makes the thing, you know. Now he was certainly no devil, or 'tis evident he could not be the saint I have already proved him; and he was a devil, not because of his faults, (for many a canonized hero has had less pretensions to the title of saint) but because, gentlemen, (since a better reason does not, just now, occur to me) because, I say, he was—let who will say to the contrary—d—n me. As a critic I advance it, and as a soldier I'll maintain

maintain it—so there's an end of the matter at once.

“ You see what an ascape you have had, my Lord.—But would any of the present company believe, after all this, those mad-men presumed to dispute this self-evident proposition? and dared to declare 'twas no decision at all, and was just proving nothing! So I instantly challenged them both, at the same time—not one up and t'other down, but both to fight me together: and taking up two swords, more pointed than any tongue or quill in the kingdom, (and yet reeking from from the havock of the day) fatigued as I was, after fighting, dancing, fanning the ladies, small-talk, politics, disputing, and proving—to it we went. Thus double-armed, with my right and left hand I at first only paried their thrusts in a little play, or so—just to shew my skill a little; and then, by a lunge, right and left, one after another, I spitted them through, like a couple of chickens, Turks, or Frenchmen!

“ You may suppose this little affair made some noise in the camp: and Prince Ferdinand, as soon as it reached his ear, came, post-haste, to command the peace—But the Prince was a hero, and loves heroes, by intuition. When he heard particulars, giving me a hug with one hand, and tearing off his shoulder-knot with the other—(this very shoulder-knot, my Lord, whose worth you

seemed to know by intuition)—he put it on himself, as an honorary reward for so famed a victory. I thought nothing of it—a mere trifle—But have ever worn this trophy, as a mark of my regard to the dear fellow who gave it.—And now, if any gentleman present can still doubt Æneas was both a saint and a devil, yet neither, let him say so.—The same alternatives are yet in my power, and he may take his choice.—Or, if Mr. Scott, or Mr. Breeze, (who seemed to coincide with my two departed antagonists) are not yet convinced, by my arguments, and chuse both together—”

“ Who I, Sir! Really, Sir, I think there is something very potent in your argument. Not that I would object—Indeed, in one of your capacities I must confess I breathe some apprehensions; for, as an humble sipper of the Heliconian limpid stream (notwithstanding their hitherto boundless praises), I do feel a natural propensity, to which we poets are addicted, to tremble at the mighty idea of a critic’s frown. I once actually sighed myself, under a little lash; but, fortunately, ’twas not aimed at my poetic powers, or I had died away. Would you believe it, Sir? A conical old gentleman’s ear, not being happily attuned to the melodious flow of my prosaic numbers, in a little preface which preceded a divine little epic poem; when I attempted to harmonize him to reason, the dull

dull Bæotian, at whose birth not a tuneful sister smiled, insisted on it, prose was prose—and verse was verse! Nay, he told me too, my very language was too flowery for common conversation; but I humbly thanked him there—for while the ladies smiled, as pleased they gathered the vivid buds from my lips, as they opened; I should still delight to cultivate, and expand their beauties."

"So do, Mr. Breeze" (cried Amelia): "I vow you never speak, but I recollect my old nurse, who used to set me to sleep, in verses about the flowery bower."

"Mr. Breeze is quite right" (added Mrs. Boothby); "for, should we be at a loss for his meaning; lost in the mazes of his labyrinthian garden, while diverted by the blossoms, we forget to look for the fruits."

"I find then, Sir," (said our second Dennis) "you pretend to estimate your own works, and dabble in criticism, notwithstanding we critics absolutely bar you poets from meddling with such serious matters: for 'tis your province to star-gaze for airy nothings, and our's to find out substantial meanings for your thoughts."

"Me! O Lord, no, Sir: such heavy weights as *thought* and *meaning*, would soon pull me down to earth, from the ethereal regions of my sun-beam imagination. I know several brother poets though, who, in defiance of your awful mandates, presume to display

play the beauties of their own works, and who dare also more presumptuously to defend the less luminous particles from the still more opaquing black-brush of—of the honourable scientific society, the obscure explainers of obscurities. But, Sir, that I have not the temerity to invade your province, is conspicuously proved, when I meddle not with your very learned and elegant criticism about (not to frighten Miss Tivolly with diabolical sounds) about their saints and devilships. However, Mr. Scott, who is no poet, has no impediment to smother the ebullitions of his sentiments.”

“ Why, Sir—I—I am ever open to conviction; and the gentleman’s opinions, as far as one can go at a glance, found orthodox.”

“ As far as one can go, Sir! By Mars’s tremendous thunder, and Bellona’s red-hot bullets—”

“ Bless me, Sir! don’t be in such a passion—you’ll terrify the ladies—A fine explanation cannot be so easily understood: criticisms are often very intricate and puzzling; and the more learned, (as your’s, Sir) the more deep and paradoxical (as your’s, Sir). But if you’ll have patience till I can con it over a little, in my study; when I take in the whole context, I make not the least doubt I shall be greatly edified by the elegant illustration of your elaborate commentary.”

“ Cer-

"Certainly" (said Mrs. Boothby) "the gentleman has reason: criticisms often soar so high, and plunge so low, that one must equally possess an eagle's wing, to pursue its flights, and the genius of an eel to sound its depths; unless by *intuition*—But pray, my Lords Sedley and Elmour, are we not to be honoured with your opinions?"

They had, indeed, done nothing but laugh from the beginning of the combat, and 'twas fortunate the earnestness of the parties prevented observation. Both now pleaded, from Mr. Breeze's authority and example, the privilege of poetry, as one that unfortunately precluded their share of the debate.

"Are you a poet too, my Lord Brandon?"

"I a poet, Madam! What do you see in me that resembles a being of that sort? A pretty occupation, truly, for a peer of the realm! Gad—if Lords turn poets thus by dozens, we shall soon make protests in blank-verse, and addresses in iambics! We should be above it: no—no, Madam; let us leave poetry, genius, and eloquence, to folly, poverty, and the commons."

"But how had your peerage settled about the horse, had you betted?"

"Why, I would not have lost him."

"You would not, my Lord? How could you have helped it, if I proved you had?"

"You

" You should know that had we betted,
but there's no occasion for informing you now."

" 'Tis well there is not, or, by the deity
I adore," (looking at Amelia) this affair had
not blown off so!"

Helena, 'twas curious to see how pride and
fear, by turns, inflated and funk those *haughty, humble* spirits. The soldier, perceiving
the affiduities of his rival, while he puffed,
now changed his attack.

" Heavens!" (cried Amelia) " how am I
situated between a red and black coat, while
one dazzles my eyes, and the other gives me
the vapours! Surely I am like the problem
of poor Æneas, between a devil and a faint
—and a great deal of one—and nothing of
the other—and—I don't remember, after all
your nonsense, how it was: but I wish you
had fought about it, and then one taking t'other,
some good had come of it at last, for I had
been delivered from your teazings, when I
tell you again, I'm not in a humour to bear
them at present."

I listened—and wished to be diverted, He-
lena—but the sad, sad—'tis worse with me
after some time's suspension; when my mind
has ranged abroad—then, on its return to a
desolated home, what a pang succeeds! After
sleep too, that refreshes not—soon as it flies,
and recollection lives; a sudden blow strikes
on my heart, and I wake to a solitary world!

I wonder where Mr. Grandby—'Tis time
to leave off my friend.

LETTER LII.

Sir George Lovemore to Ed. Grandby, Esq.

WHY Grandby! what the devil's—become of you? One—two—three—how many letters? and not a line in return. Did you break your neck on your way to town? or fall asleep on your arrival? Perhaps you are still wiping your eyes about Sophia? I love a tender heart; but your's is too soft, Grandby—twill never let you enjoy your own happiness, for the woes of others. Then 'tis in vain, and weakness in the extreme, to feel too sensibly what cannot be redressed. Poh, poh—she will soon throw off the dolefuls, dress up her charms in their wonted smiles and graces, forget her old, get a new lover, and again be as gay as ever.

O these women! have I not studied them, Grandby? Ay, at the expence of my eyes and ears, studied them? Gazed till almost blind, and listened till quite stunned?

As to Sophia—I tell you she is too wise to be a fool, too good-natured to be cruel, and much too handsome to spoil her face with weeping to no purpose. I have half a mind to lay siege to her myself—when she begins to tire. Shall I Grandby? Will you give me leave?

A propos—What's Amelia about? Is she as saucy as ever? or has her sister spoiled her? I shall soon be in town; and remember to introduce

troduce me to one sister, as a grave, sober, sensible, young man—a particular friend; to the other—a gay, wild coxcomb—no great favourite of yours.

Bath is, as much as ever the land of folly—just after my own heart. Nobody thinks here—all are too-wise to be unhappy: and how often would reflection make us so! Hey, Grandby?

You cannot imagine what a delightful little adventure I have in hand now—Why, man—why look so grave? I do not seek adventures; but, if they will throw themselves in my way—must I hide myself in a desert, to shun them?

Here's the prettiest couple—stark, staring mad, galloping after fashion; though nature never meant them for fools: the greater the crime, you know; and should they not pay for their folly?

The lady's ashamed of loving her husband, and he growls at the fondness he joys to inspire! Now will it not be good-natured to relieve them from such distress, if I can?

I have not the least doubt of success; and, in the end, of obliging both, by my triumph; for how easy the reconciliation to vice, when once we grow ashamed of virtue! We in the beginning, put on the appearance of the first, only as a mask to conceal the latter: it soon fits easy, next becomes our own, and is then worn for ever. What though Mrs. Townly looks at her husband, while listening to me, will

will not her eye soon follow the direction of her ear? And though Townly, at present, makes wry faces as he watches me, will he not be at length reconciled to what he can at all endure? Yes, yes, Grandby—depend on it, as the husband grows more careless, the lover becomes more interesting, till hatred succeeds to indifference, on one side—and love to gallantry, on the other.

I never doubted conquest, when a married woman permitted me to whisper “soft nothings” in herear—No, Grandby; she never stops there.

As Heaven is my judge, when I see an affectionate couple (such instances excepted, where they don’t chuse to be happy); I’d as soon attempt their lives, as their felicity: but when things are—as they are—why then one must be blind, deaf, and dumb, to escape, in the general confusion.

“ Lovemore, were you to see a fellow-creature on the edge, would you push him down the precipice?”

Something like this you asked me once before. No—but were a madman to fling a casket of jewels from a height, as I chanced to walk below, I might as well catch it as another: mightn’t I, Edmond? No harm in that, I hope?

Adieu: I fly to give my beautiful pupil a lesson in the science of that fashion she so wishes to cultivate. The husband, too, is ambitious of her shining to advantage—Surely he will thank me for my pains.

LET.

LETTER LIII

Edmond Grandby, Esq. to Sir George Lovemore.

I HAVE been walking through the streets, in the wind and rain, till I can walk no longer. I always set out with a purposed intention, but ever forget it, till my return. I resolve, Lovemore, to observe, in every face I meet, if such a thing as happiness inhabits any of their bosoms; for I begin to suspect—But my eye soon leaves the crowd, and turns inward, where it has nothing to do.

At first, perhaps, a few attract attention—and then I tire—What fools, Lovemore! One looks as if he met with a disappointment, and so increased it by vexation: another—a loss, and, finding content after, remains poor indeed! A third, by his bustling, busy air, seems pursuing, what, if he does attain, will scarce repay his agitation; and, if he misses—But see! in that eye, how hope and pleasure sparkle—He eagerly springs forward to catch the prize he overshoots, while the slow-paced, plodding fellow, leering over his shoulder as he passes by, seizes it, without or right, or expectation. In that man's face, possession's painted; but the object shrinks as he grasps it! Alas! his deluded eye had measured the lengthened shadow only, not the substance.

But here it surpasses expectation—even hope soared not so far—and lo! satiety succeeds!

ceeds! Then, Lovemore, some one I have perhaps seen once or twice before, stops—takes my hand, then asks so kindly of my health—and, ere I can reply, pursues his way, indifferent if I live or die.

Another—ever my warm, sincerest friend—just lifts his hat, and flies as I approach him. But, wherefore should those regard me? Those did not disappoint—they never loved me; and if they did—why, what then?

Lovemore—do you know of any sequestered spot, a great way—a very great way from disappointment, from care, from misery, from society? Let it be a wild grove, at the foot of some high, bleak, craggy mountain, ever covered with dark, brooding clouds, with torrents of water dashing down the rugged sides. It must be surrounded by wild beasts, and birds—The first will not betray me—I placed no confidence in them—The latter I may love—they never will abuse it—But no human being but myself must ever trace the region—They carry passions in their faces, Lovemore, and may again interest me: they may tell me too, they love me; and I am so weak, I may again believe them—Then, if they deceive me, as they certainly will, I shall be again unhappy; and so leave the world in vain, and take all this pains for nothing. So, Lovemore, look out for me.

What occasions this tightness across my forehead—like a cord binding it—My heart, too

too—What ails me? I will lay me down, and rest.

* * * *

'Tis yet early dawn, but they will not let me sleep—Then when I did slumber a little, the crowded scenes of the day continued to distract my wild imagination. I thought myself amid a throng, who pushed their way, regardless of every interest but their own, and *self* was written in all their contracted brows: excepting a very few, who, trying to ease the passage of the rest; as they modestly drew back, were, in a moment, stripped, and laughed at, for their folly.

As I mused on those things, my whole attention was suddenly engaged by a splendid gilt carriage, with ducal coronets blazoned on every side, drawn by many a rich caparisoned horse; and a train of shining liveried attendants hung around, and followed in stately show: while the gaping crowd forgot awhile their own pursuits, and stared with delight, astonishment, and envy. A lady, whose charms were more dazzling than the jewels that covered her, sat in the chariot, and by her a man bending under age, deformity, and care! but she regarded him not, as he gazed on her; for, exulting in her pride, she looked on every side, enjoying the deep admiration she drew. As I stood, with folded arms, wondering what this might be, suddenly a fearful band rushed forth, and surrounding

surrounding the chariot, stopt the lady on her way. First, indifference and satiety threw a veil over her eyes, that she might no longer take pleasure in her sumpture; and, when she turned from them to the companion of her days, a loathing disgust sickened her heart. Then fear and jealousy pervaded his breast, and he still revenged his pains, by tearing with their pointed fangs, her tender bosom.

Lo! Discontent and Despair now hovered over her, and all the gay flowers of her youth, withered before them! Casting her languid eyes around, she beheld me in the throng (as she held out her helpless hands for aid), and cried—" O Grandby! and was it for this"—I sprung forward to her relief (for I loved the beautiful vision); but the man held her by a cruel chain, that glittered like gold to the sight, but was formed of the roughest iron, and too, too strong for me to break! Now, in a rage, he struck her with it on the heart, and her gentle spirit fled for ever!

While I wept in an agony of grief and despair, the chariot, crowd, and dæmons, vanished from my view; and, turning, I saw an azure cloud, beaming with stars, descending, that held inviting angels! And, as they struck the harmonic string, with heavenly voice they sung—" O come away!" The sweet spirit then joined the seraphic choir, and, smiling, beckoned me to follow—I tried

—but

—but a mortal weight still held me down to earth, and they ascended—She, pure as her sister-angels, but for one spot—Forgive it, Heaven! I pursued the radiant track, till it was lost in æther, then with a pang awaked.

O Lovemore!

L E T T E R LIV.

Sir George Lovemore to Edmond Grandby, Esq.

DEATH and furies! what's the matter now! I always thought, Grandby, your felicity, too finely spun out, would turn your head at last—and now, like the fellow in the street, you have more than you know what to do with. Thank Heaven, my brains, made of common stuff, promise duration, at least—that is, barring accidents—Should I be stung with love, or poetry, you know, Grandby—No great danger of either though, and so the stores of my fool's noddle will last me out the voyage.

But what the devil do you go out happiness-hunting for? Egad you'll have luck, if not even worse off than t'other fool (with the lantern) who went on much such another wild-goose chase.

Yet, what do you mean, Grandby! And to what region are you soaring now? for, hang me if I can guess. Do you design to banter,

banter, or perplex me? I was ever good at charades, and such stuff—But crowds, and coaches, and clouds; angels, ladies, and dæmons! Whew!—why, this tune's set fifteen notes higher than that under the window, by moon-light. Not within the reach of my powers, however; and, devil take me if I can make out one word of the medley.

Pretty fellow, truly, to sit down, and amuse yourself with writing dreams; and, what's worse, with inventing them; for such a mass of heterogeneous nonsense never entered a rational caput, in a dream, I'm sure.

I hate poets, and poetry—'Tis the worst feature about you, Grandby: well enough for women—yes, it prepares a woman's imagination charmingly for us, and saves a world of trouble: but a man to hack his fancy, and sit down to knot verses—ridiculous!

You've been reading the Arabian Nights, or such trash, I suppose; and so your prolific brain, immediately hatching Eastern tales, you favour me with this notable dream, as a first sample of your manner?

And then, again—I look out for a grove in a desert, and a mountain, for you! Do you think me a fool? By my soul, Grandby, I believe you're but a man, after all; and so have a splice of the puppy in you too.

Well, to leave your whims, and talk sense—I have persuaded Mrs. Townly (I think I have) that a husband's being ashamed of his affection

affection for a beautiful wife, is a far greater crime than total blindness, for, in the last instance, he's only a brute, and she can't resent what he cannot help; but, to dare to sin against the supremacy of the charms he feels, is an affront indeed, and ought to be punished accordingly. What would the pleasures of sovereignty be, unless its power were confessed? or the value of a diamond, if not to be worn in public? Then what an example to admiring worlds—that he who best should know the worth of the heavenly treasure he possesses, neglects it—and appears to disdain the conquering chains he should own—soft fetters, so many others would be blest, would be proud to wear, and wear in open triumph!

I go on swimmingly, Grandby—and have a sop for Cerberus too—He fortunately thinks me the very quintessence of refinement, and the noblest acquisition to his fashionable list; and will therefore bear a great deal, (though he does “grin horribly” sometimes) rather than break with me. I'm putting him on an adventure too—just to do like the rest of the world, you know—One must not be singular—This will take him up a little; and he will not be perpetually going out, because a husband should ever be abroad, and perpetually returning with some noodle excuse, because—he's afraid to continue so.

One

One little check in my career, though—not from the wife, she's in my interests: nor yet from the husband, for he's but—a husband: 'tis from myself, or rather from a friend, with his interruptions (and be hanged to him) at such a time. Plaguy unlucky this, Grandby; for, if you make ever such way to a woman's heart, leave the pursuit for a moment, she's off, and you've all your labour to go over again. Then, should another step in while I'm away—Why 'twill be rather provoking, after such pains to persuade a woman to reason, another should obtain the honour of the conquest, and reap all the fruits of my lessons. Devil take the fellow for kreaking in on my adventures, with his own.

If I can, Grandby, (as I shall not be a thousand miles from you) I'll give you a call, ere I return; for though I don't comprehend your rambling heroics, (some love-quarrel, I suppose) I do not half like them.

What do you mean by the tightness in your head? You tied your night-cap too *tight*, lay uneasy, and then got up to the moon.

I did not mean to stay so long at Bath, and should not think of returning, but for the improvement of this innocent, untutored country girl. Whether 'tis from love, or only a frolic, she does run in my head a little, and I shan't rest till I drive her out again.

LETTER LV.

Mrs. Boothby to Lady Eglinton.

DON'T be—for heaven's sake don't be too much alarm'd—but—why must I shock you with the dreadful intelligence? Amelia—the cruel Amelia has half distracted us all: her poor sister—Oh my friend! Amelia has left us: she has eloped—and is by this the wife of—I dread your knowing whom.—

We were last night at the play: Captain Flowers handed out Amelia. She managed to separate herself from us, and just at the door, telling Flowers she saw Mr. Boothby and her sister just behind (which was true), sent him with a message to a lady at a little distance, while she staid for me with Miss Tivolly's party, then waiting for their carriages. Miss Tivolly declared (on our coming up and Flowers joining us, all eagerly enquiring for Amelia) that a gentleman she never saw before, the moment Captain Flowers turned away, came to let Miss Eglinton know Mrs. Boothby was going out at the other door, and sent him to conduct her where he knew the carriage waited. Bidding Miss Tivolly good night, she flew off with the stranger, but which way she did not observe. Miss Tivolly cannot even describe the man; but to what purpose if she could? The shocking truth struck both me and her sister

sister the instant we missed her, and this account confirmed it.

I carried Mira home, sinking under her terror, (in the confusion what could we do?) while Mr. Boothby engaged every one he knew about him, and their servants, in a search, but could obtain no intelligence of consequence. Some declared they saw the lady described put into a chariot that drove one way; others, in a coach that drove another—and the night passed away in fruitless enquiries. The glimmering hope by which we attempted to support ourselves vanished on arriving at our own door: Amelia had not been heard of.

Mira, notwithstanding her extreme agitation almost overpowered her, would accompany me to Lady Priscilla—she was at home—had company—I thought it impossible she should deceive me, were my suspicions founded. If not really ignorant of Amelia's flight, she possesses more art than even I suspect her for; she seemed surprised—affected—I questioned her without the least ceremony. She confessed having always advised Amelia to encourage the addresses of my Lord Sommers: indeed she believed she preferred him before any of her other admirers; but never wished her to elope with him: what occasion for that? Why Miss Eglington took so extraordinary a step was quite astonishing, for my Lord Sommers was every way unexceptionable

ceptionable. So he is, my dear friend—would to heaven he had been the man! Mira declared she suspected from some hints her sister had lately thrown out in his favour, he was not quite indifferent to her.

Mr. Blomer, at my request, immediately went to Lord Sommers's house—Alas! we had worse to apprehend: my Lord returned with Mr. Blomer: his distress (for he owned he had before some hope) proved he was not the happy man. Every gentleman who had been known to address the runaway, was now traced and questioned. All were alarmed, but all were innocent. Our distraction (Lady Priscilla or felt or feigned it well) was now beyond description.

The dear Mira—what an additional shock! —And how she feels for your affliction too! When Mr. Boothby joined us at Lady Priscilla's ('twas now broad day,) he asked if any one had thought of enquiring of Grandby? He learned he was still in town. Mr. Blomer snatched up his hat—Mira turned yet paler—she attempted to speak—the words died on her lips. Lady Priscilla too would have prevented his going, but Mr. Boothby overruled her.

Grandby had not been at home all night: neither his servants, nor the people he lodged with, knew any thing of him: he had been of late abroad whole days and nights together, none could tell where. Mira left her
feat—

feat—How my heart ached for her! How Lady Priscilla eyed her! Mr. Blomer went again—Grandby was returned: he found him pale, fatigued, his boots and dress splashed over with mud. Mr. Blomer reported there was no making any thing of his answers: all was confusion: sometimes he thought him jesting: then again he seemed quite absent, and at last sunk into a full silence from which not all his efforts could arouse him. This raised Mr. Boothby's suspicions, and he was going himself, determined to be satisfied. Here Mira's emotion broke out—she intreated Mr. Boothby not to affront Mr. Grandby farther by an imputation he had already treated in the manner described. He was above giving an answer to such enquiries—he was above being concerned in actions of the kind. Let her but be indulged in this one request, and she for once would answer for his innocence. Lady Priscilla seconding her, the affair was dropped. But is not this account of Grandby a very strange one?

This day and the succeeding night passed, as before, in conjecture, and enquiries equally vague and unsuccessful. Still we forebore writing to you; for what addition had this dreadful suspense and uncertainty given your affliction! But this morning Lady Priscilla, with a face (whether real or affected) of wonder and distress, hurried to us with a letter she had just received. Good heaven! What

could we believe ! Gone off with Lord Winterton ! We did not know they were acquainted—that she had even seen him—he is a stranger to us—to Lady Priscilla : but his character—ah ! who has not heard of Lord Winterton ! Lady Priscilla left the letter for your perusal: what will you think ! Infatuated girl ! What could influence her to make so preposterous a choice ? Not one of her other lovers but had been less exceptionable : even he she once threatened. Lord Winterton is old enough to be her father : so far from his person being (or ever having been) attractive, he is plain to a degree. His fortunes are low and broken, and he has not one good quality on earth to recommend him ! Unmanly wretch, to take advantage of a weak, silly girl, and, in defiance of the laws of his country, to inveigle her thus from her friends ! By her aunt's will he gets immediate possession of the fortune she left her ; but her father, as she is under age—yet what can now be done ? what could he wish now to do ?

Mira will embrace you a very few hours after your reception of this unhappy intelligence. How do I now regret my wishes to evade a misfortune of the kind, to be the very means of plunging us in one still greater—blind, erring mortals that we are ! Oh my friend ! how have all your hopes now dwindled away to nothing, since the time you committed their dearest objects to my charge !

Mira,

Mira, Amelia, both—both!—dear, suffering mother! Oh that I could impart some consolation to the deep anguish—but if your own breast supplies it not, how shall mine, or any other earthly power avail! Oh madam, now, now exert yourself, and be a greater example than ever to a world that wants it. That I, who only wished to add to your repose and felicity, should have thus unfortunately contributed to lessen both, believe most keenly afflicts your

E. BOOTHBY.

L E T T E R LVI.

Miss A. Eglington to Lady Priscilla Blomer.

(Enclosed in the preceding.)

GOOD heavens, Priscilla! what have I done! How will you all be surprised! astonished—and you particularly, at a step you could not have the least suspicion of! you who believed yourself so well informed of every turn, every secret of your Amelia's heart.—Well, don't be very angry with me, my dearest friend. I knew your partiality for Lord Sommers so interested you in his favour, you would not listen with patience to my preference of another; and so—and so, Priscilla, by the time you receive this letter,

I shall be the wife of Lord Winterton, Priscilla,—with whom I fancy you are not acquainted, as I never saw him of your parties. Indeed we only met (at first) at public places: he then wrote to me, and after that we had frequent private interviews at a common friend's. Now, you will say, all this was very imprudent; but, love, my Lady—only think of Love! You forget sure—but no, 'tis I forget—I think, Priscilla, you never felt the tender passion. My duty too—I fear my father will be offended a little—Then my promise—but love, I repeat, (and every book in the world says the same) is the most powerful of passions, and even duty of every kind must bow before its altar. I hope Sir Charles will forgive this first and last offence, and I will never do so again; for really I was so frightened and fluttered at slipping out of the playhouse in such a hurry—and I trembled so for fear of being catched—Lord, how I trembled, Priscilla! What, I wonder, did the April-fools (I was so finely waiting for) say, when they returned and found the bird was flown? Ha! Ha! Poor souls! How like simpletons they must have looked? But my sister—and Mrs. Boothby—(I am afraid she will have a bad opinion of me after all her politeness)—and you, my poor Priscilla—I wish I could have managed without alarming you all so—except Mr. Boothby: I should perfectly have enjoyed seeing his fat Nabobship skipping about on his

his gouty toes, as if hunting a bag of rupees on storming the town of a rich Ally in India. I wonder if the news has yet reached Eglington-hall? My God! What a naughty, naughty girl they will think me! But they will forgive me, I hope they will forgive me, and then I shall be so happy, drive away in my coach and six loaded with coronets and servants, and who but Lady Winterton! Lord, Lord, my Lady! The first time I appear in the first row of a side-box at the play!—I won't go till a crowded night, and the second act begins; then, Lady Winterton's box! Lady Winterton's box! Every body's disturbed to make way for me. Then such delightful confusion, while all stare at my diamonds—and for the rest of the evening no one minds the stage.—

I write this full drive for Scotland—no fear of pursuit now: but for this apprehension, I would have gratified all your curiosities before, and this letter I hope will satisfy every body for the present. As soon as the charming knot is tied (which it would be a sin for any one to attempt undoing,) I shall write and beg pardon of my parents.—Sure, they won't be so cruel as to refuse my first request after my marriage. The carriage waits—I fly—Adieu, Priscilla—and hey for a trip to Scotland!—

LETTER LVII.

Mrs. Howell to Lady Priscilla Blomer.

I HOPE, my Lady, you have not yet yet shewn the letter Miss Eglington left with you: if you have, and we should be pursued, all will be ruined: for we are still at —, where we met my Lord, and nothing but absolute force will now carry Amelia one step further. What an unfortunate circumstance, that my Lord Winterton's age and appearance are so much against him! Had those been favourable, the rest had not been attended to, though from an untoward chance she has learned his real character, and I wish she had learned no more.

From the moment Mr. Stormer handed her from the play-house into the coach where I waited to receive her, she began (as you had apprehended) to repent. 'Twas well your Ladyship's precaution engaged my attendance; for Stormer (Oh these men are but mere milk-sops with all their boasted courage), moved by her tears and prayers to set her down (any where), so she could but return to her sister her darling sister! who would break her heart the moment she missed her; the tender-hearted puppy (I say) had at this nonsense certainly betrayed his trust, but for me. As you commanded, I called to her recollection all the charms of title, fortune, independence.

pendance, show—but all indeed to very little purpose.—Her father—her dear, her tender mother, was now all her cry. Wretch that she was—she'd break her parents hearts: to what had Lady Priscilla's intreaties forced her against her inclination!—for she had before repented, and foreseen she never could go through with it. Again we preached and tried to sooth her—In vain: she was at one time almost outrageous, and it was with the greatest difficulty we got her into the post-chaise at the appointed place.

When she was quite exhausted with raving, weeping, and lamenting by turns, I flattered myself she had recovered the fright to which we then attributed her preposterous behaviour, and took the opportunity to prepare her for Lord Winterton's appearance in the morning. She started from her reverie at the mention of his name—“Gracious heaven! whither am I going? To a man I have never yet beheld! Oh Priscilla! Priscilla! to what a step have you led me? Miserable girl, to suffer myself to be persuaded by any one to fly from the arms of my friends to a stranger's! What though he possesses all the virtues and attractions in the world? I may be wretched with them all—And how can he love from having seen me only once in public? All—all this occurred to me in time, yet I suffered myself to be prevailed on.” Here, my Lady, I repeated all your former arguments: told her

her again and again, that most great matches were in like manner formed without the parties ever having seen, or but slightly having seen, each other: that Lord Winterton, however, had often gazed on the charms which, but once beheld, had had sufficient power to enslave his heart for ever. First impressions were always the most violent and lasting; and though my Lord might not at first sight appear to such very striking advantage, did not Princesses, swayed by the charms of state alone, easily dispense with the trifling show of a mere gaudy outside? This, Madam, was the only hint I ventured; but, prepossessed by the too flattering picture you drew to bias her, it was not understood.

When we arrived at—, my Lord received Miss Eglington at the door. His figure reflected not the image your description had painted in her mind. Not having an idea he could be the man, she returned his salute with a slight courtesy, and, scarcely regarding, suffered him to lead her to the drawing-room, where, trembling as she entered, she expected to see her blooming Adonis in all the charms with which her wild imagination had arrayed him. As soon as entered, his Lordship, on his bended knee, kissed the hand he held—She started, and hastily withdrew it. Mr. Stormer introduced L O R D W I N T E R T O N—“Great God, deliver me!” and, as if struck with a thunderbolt, she fell senseless

senseless on the floor. Not all your guarding him against surprize, not even his own natural assurance, could bear so much. He frowned, bit his lips, cursed, stamped with rage, nay, something like a threat of revenge.—'Twas well she could not hear him. I besought his Lordship (as we bore her to a sopha) to be calm till she was better reconciled. “Reconciled, Madam!—Better reconciled to receive as she ought to receive (inferior as she is) the honour designed her by one of my distinction!” I feared the consequences of Amelia’s first surprize, and luckily recollecting your Ladyship’s letter, I entreated him to read it in the next apartment, and to be advised by its contents to proceed by the gentlest methods. “Consider you are a lover, my Lord”—“I am yet a lover, Madam, and will yet obey; but”—Miss Eglington was recovering, and Stormer ventured to lead the haughty peer away. ’Twas well he was away. Oh the indignant looks she cast on me the moment her eyes were opened! And then, while they flashed hatred, contempt, and almost fury, “Is this” says she, “the hideous monster into whose power I have so basely been betrayed! Oh Lady Priscilla, now, now I first behold you! now have your insinuating arts prevailed over my unsuspecting temper. Till now I was ensnared. Alas! I yet—But though I deserve even this, think not I will ever yield—no, I will

will die ere I submit. Perfidious friend! is this then the lovely youth with whose description you so often attempted to warm my heart! Where are the gentle looks, and where the graceful manners, the virtues, that were to shine through all his form? No, virtue never inhabited a form so frightful. But why was I deceived? To what purpose? If you only wanted to secure my remaining with you in town, sure, sure many others"—I attempted to speak—"And what art thou, creature, who hast dared to join in this impious plot to deceive me?"—She really awed me, Madam: you cannot imagine how pride raised and supported her.—"Go, this instant go order the carriage, and let me hasten, ere too late, to deprecate, by the truest submission, the wrath of my offended family. Oh my father! my father! how have I erred! And severely do the thorns with which I now wound your heart punish the unfeeling wretch, till now unfeeling—that could"—Her tears choaked her voice. Lord Winter-ton entered the room; he tried to be tender, but she soon threw him off his guard by her abrupt behaviour, and his violence has but served to disgust her more. The scene is now one continual bout of altercation. The lady, done with intreaties and complaints, boldly demands her freedom, and threatens the execution of the offended laws for her detention. My Lord vows he will resign her but

but with life, and declares, unless she yields to her favouring destiny, and yields with a grace, though he will still detain her, she never shall possess the honour he at first designed her. This is only a puff, my Lady: we know 'tis her fortune he most considers. I hinted to your Ladyship her having discovered his real character: the particulars I have already informed you of, had surely sufficiently expos'd it. But his Lordship determined at least to be sincere, and, by opening all his virtues to her view at once, to put it out of his Lady's power to charge him hereafter with deception.

As we wait the gentleman's arrival (he promised to be here to-day) who is to accompany and give away the bride, my Lord, already tired with domestic broils, sought relief from the bottle, with a few old friends he unfortunately met with in the evening. Miss Eglington would not be prevailed on last night to retire to rest, though terribly fatigued with travelling all the night before, and fretting all the succeeding day; and my Lord (quite intoxicated) found her on his return walking up and down the room, like a tragedy-queen, in disdainful silence, for she now scarcely condescends to speak to me. He approached the disdainful girl, embraced her, kissed her in spite of resistance; repeatedly kissed her, even her neck. Terrified to death, she flew to me for protection, whom she had so contemptuously

ously treated, and clinging round me, (though she had, on my venturing to advise, just before imperiously ordered me away,) now implored me not to leave her. I begged my Lord to retire, but on his refusing to do so, her violent spirit broke through all her fears, and she asked him how he dared to insult a Lady like her, by entering her presence in that vile condition?

“ It is a habit I have, my love, and as I often indulge it, I wish to inure you to it by commencing at once” —

“ Wretch! What have I to do with your beastly habits? Let me begone this moment, or expect—remember I am an heiress, and tremble (since honour cannot sway you) tremble at the laws that will chastise, as it deserves, your violence. And tremble too at an insulted father, who, though I have deserted his protection, will yet revenge the wrongs I suffer from this outrage, this infamous attempt.” Lord Winterton’s countenance gathered thunder as she spoke, and, setting his back against the door,

“ Where are you going, Madam? How can you escape me, foolish girl? And though the doors were open, whither would you go? Say, has not your conduct forever barred those of your father, and of your other friends, against you? And where can you find protection but in those arms whither you fled from theirs to seek it?” —

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" My Lord, I will own (as I feel) my follies ; and, humbled as I am, at their feet implore the pardon my future conduct shall deserve. I will promise"—

" Will they again believe you ? Have you not already falsified your word ?"

" Oh Priscilla ! how have you every way betrayed my easy confidence !";

" My Lord, experience now will ratify my word. I have not a doubt myself of my reception and forgiveness : but though (justly incensed my parents should spurn me away from their feet as I kneeled, and though despised too by that very world that misled me, there is no wretchedness I would not gladly prefer to the horror of being your wife—So, without troubling yourself about either me, or my friends, or with consequences you can have nothing to say to ; let me go (I bid you) when and whither I please, for you have no right to detain me."

" No right ! Have I not bought you ? Are you not, therefore, mine ? my property ?"

To describe Amelia's look now, would be impossible : it was some time before she could give utterance to her words. I warned my Lord, in a whisper, of his unguarded expressions—even his own safety endangered by intoxication, of which I ventured to remind him. He heard me not. Amelia's haughty contempt now bursting on him in a torrent I cannot recollect, he answered to her charge
of

of falsehood (among the other princely virtues she was prepared to expect in him) "that he had bought her: to the ruin of half his remaining estate, he had bought her: and did she suppose hers should not indemnify his loss? Yes. Another day would make it all his own (for she had left herself no friend to secure her proper settlements), and he would enjoy it all. All but the little estate in Kent, which was by agreement to be sold for an additional reward and payment to his kind procures." Procures! Diabolical villainy! But 'tis an infamous falsehood —black as the soul that forms it! Who has the power to sell either me or my estates? Or who would dare assume any such authority? What right?"—

" That, Madam, is none of my busines: how the right was derived which conveyed you and all you possess to me, I neither know nor care; but suppose it was delegated by yourself. If you thought proper, at such an age, to withdraw yourself from your natural guardians, and, having better dependance on a stranger, confiding in her superior judgment, have yielded yourself submissive to her sway, and put yourself in her power; now, (doubtless, depending on your usual implicit faith in her all-regulating taste), because she finds it convenient to her interest to manage the trust with which you honoured her, not altogether

together to your whimsical fancy, (though she has faithfully attended to the chief point, your love of rank); mine, madam, is one of the first in the kingdom, surely now you have not the least right to complain, even though you believe yourself aggrieved."

Miss Eglington continued a statue of astonishment, her eyes fixed on my Lord, till towards the conclusion of this fine harangue, when shame bent them down to the ground. I endeavoured again to interrupt him in vain. Imputing her silence to conviction, he was but the more elated by his supposed success.

" Now, humbled vixen, descend from your imaginary heights, own the mortification you feel, and bow before the honour intended you by a man of my rank and consequence, who not only descends to ally himself to birth inferior as yours, but can even stoop to receive you at a sale: and whose timely compliance, perhaps has prevented your falling a prey, by the arts of a needy, mercenary woman, to some low citizen, who, seduced by that bewitching baby-face, had paid her well for the beauteous piece of wax-work at her intire disposal." —

" My Lord," answered Miss Eglington, without any of her usual violence of spirit, " you, indeed, behold me humbled, but not mortified: no; believe me, I am raised—and feel something supporting me beyond any thing I ever knew before. That I am thunderstruck

derstruck at a piece of wickedness I never had an idea of till now, and equally shocked at the barbarous perfidy of a woman I once so loved, is, indeed, true; but the conduct that has opened my eyes to truth has also taught me to bear with better fortitude the effects of my own rashness and blind infatuation. I thank you, sir, for this intelligence as well as for this further discovery of yourself: not that it was at all necessary to increase my opinion of you after the moment we first met; for your face is the mirror of your soul, my Lord, and the virtues of sincerity (from whatever source they spring) you certainly possess. I contest not your superiority after the noble proof you have given of it, by uniting with a worthless woman to ensnare a weak, deluded girl, whom, with all her inferiority, you were content to steal away, for your exalted qualities could not support the light. And now, my Lord, for the lesson I have received—a lesson on which I build all the good I yet hope to enjoy, I, indeed, owe you my most grateful acknowledgements: and I promise you, ('tis all I can,) that if you will restore me to my friends, to prevail on them to drop the prosecution you are from my repugnance (for I will suffer death rather than be your wife), now doubly exposed to. Further, my Lord, since I now perceive my fortune to be your only object, I will engage, upon my word,

on

on my coming of age, to pay you ten thousand pounds."

Here Lord Winterton burst into a loud laugh. "A very fine dependence, were I disposed to listen to it, should I have on your word, Madam, after the proof you have already given your father of its worth! But what a madman should I be, having the whole in my possession, and this pretty puppet figure in the bargain, to resign either? Upon my soul I begin to be in love with you to: d—n the fellow but for whose delay you were now my wife—Devil punish him with a wife of his own for it. Mrs. Howell, we'll proceed by day-break whether he comes or not. By heaven I was never half so taken with Sally Moore herself, whom I left sighing and whining, though I promised to return in a week with a lapful of my new wife's jewels. Is she not a charming creature! What eyes! What a mouth!" and again he attempted to kiss her. She repulsed him with disdain.

"Now, how becoming a countess that air, Mrs. Howell! But my sweet girl, though you may awe the vulgar by it, I will not allow the least atom of it to me beyond the next four and twenty hours: you must then be all submission to my sovereign will, and in my presence a mere humble, dutiful, obedient piece of resignation. And who can tell but that, softened by your good behaviour, I may in time relent, leave Sally and her dozen brats

to

to starve, and reward your patience, love, and complaisance (for I will have no murmuring—a troublesome, fond, jealous wife is the devil), and reform? A reformed rake, you know, makes the best husband. But this I would not have you too sure of—only comfort yourself with the distant hope of it: all things are uncertain: it may, or it may not happen."

Yet, Amelia, whatever I do, I will not have you seek consolation abroad: too well acquainted by experience with your pretty tricks and inventive genius; by not allowing you the means to do so, I shall best prevent the exercise of your powers, and bar all female friendships as the most dangerous connections you can form. Besides, your allowance will not be sufficient to support expences of any kind, as I shall have occasion for the whole of your fortune for my own pleasures."

Amelia made him no answer, but continued walking pensively about the room, and my Lord, by this almost asleep, bid her good night, advising her to be a good girl, and repose her perturbed spirits against the approaching happy morn, that was to make her the envy of her sex.

The moment the door shut him out, she threw herself on her knees, and besought me to save her from that hated monster, and (will your Ladyship believe it) endeavoured by promises of the highest reward to bribe
my

my faith from you, and favour her escape! She was soon silenced by my anfwer; and I wonder what Miss Eglinton saw in me that could thus encourage her to attempt my virtue.

She next took it in her head to write to you: I enclose her letter, and would advise, should you think it best to disown my Lord's imprudent charge, to exert all your wonted influence to persuade her to immediate compliance; for notwithstanding the high hand his Lordship carries to frighten her to measures, he is greatly puzzled how to proceed. If she continues obstinate, he must relinquish all idea of Scotland, and his own chaplain, at all hazard, must perform the ceremony. But, perhaps, would your Ladyship descend to confession, it might soften her heart—Her simplicity (though she is strangely altered) may lay her open to your insinuative powers. Own your difficulties. Call on her exalted friendship to relieve your perplexities, and nobly save your character, by conquering her aversion, and marrying Lord Winterton. For heaven's sake, Madam, prevail on my Lord to be more guarded for the present. Honour me, by the return of this express, with your direction on this unlooked for perplexity, and believe me

Your ever devoted

C. HOWELL.

L E T-

LETTER LVIII.

Miss A. Eglington to Lady Priscilla Blomer.

THE veil of error is now entirely removed from my long deluded sight, my Lady, and what yet could remain after seeing him, your vile accomplice, without the least attention to your blasted honour, has himself discovered. But how should he be true to you, who can thus exult in his own villainy!

And is it indeed to the infamous Winter-ton you have sacrificed me, Priscilla! And was it for this you too successfully detached me from my own family; Ah! how conspicuous now the train, by which you led me by degrees to the dreadful gulph before me! —Oh yet save me, Priscilla! Friend! Companion!—By every tender name by which I once knew you, I implore you, ere too late, to save me from misery for ever. Blast not, I beseech you, every prospect of my life, by devoting my wretched days to the man who already tyrannizes over the prey you ensnared but to deliver to his brutal fury. Consider my youth—pity my inexperience—and snatch me from the frightful monster I hate. Remember my family, my friends—say not (with the wretch) I have forfeited their protection—I have, I have—but by whose instigation forfeited? How often, when a ray
of

of reason has flashed on my mind, have you obstructed its further way? How often, when truth, from the bright examples around me, has irresistibly reached my heart, have you prevented its leaving the least impression there? And, when my bosom has opened to nature, did you not kill each blooming affection as it sprung? Oh why, (but a few days since,) when I resolved to be happy, and obey the sweet impulse I received from a fond mother's pen; when I felt more joy from the grateful tears the kindest of sisters shed on my bosom; why then did you tear me away from her? Did I not own to you more real pleasure from that tender moment, than from any of the scenes I most delighted in bestowed?—And when I have confessed those began to lose their charms of novelty from repetition, and that I sometimes relished more the conversations I listened to, when, Mira, Grandby, Lady Elmour, Mrs. Boothby spoke; Oh! how have you then rallied away “my strange infatuation!” Ah! how I now blush for and lament those *stranger still*, that gained you attention from my partial madness! Then the affection, the friendship, which you pretended could not bear to see me sacrificed for ever—And now how I am sacrificed, indeed! and by her—Heavens! Is this the man you adorned with every charm of mind and person! and whose only reason for concealing the passion you painted in such

glowing colours, was his inferiority of fortune? Fool that I was, not to reflect in time, that with such virtues as you endowed him with, he would neither have descended to concealment, or have been guilty of so base an action: nor had such been necessary, when my father, overlooking Mr. Grandby's want of fortune, proved his little attention to that where real worth existed.

But, my Lady, it is little more my misfortune that reflection came too late to prevent the completion of your cruel plan, than that the arts, by which you effected it, were of that subtle nature, that no description of their power can gain me the least excuse for suffering myself to fall into your snares. I have frequently, when you have overthrown my resolution, on recollection, wondered where all the arguments were fled by which you had convinced me. And though I now know they derived from my weakness their greatest strength; yet by what fascinating wiles you drew away, on last Monday evening, the feelings of my heart, while (exulting in the transports I derived from them) I informed you of my voluntary resolution to accompany my sister, and to drop all further idea of Lord Winterton; how then, determined I was, you not only made me relinquish my intention, but obtained my immediate concurrence to the rash action I never thought of at a distance without shuddering, is now to me indeed incomprehensible?

prehensible! Was it fatality? Was nothing but the keen anguish I now endure, to atone for my errors, my delusion? Oh Priscilla! let this suffice, and punish me no further—See me now—overcome with fatigue—tortured with apprehensions of irremediable mischief—my reputation already stabbed—my heart, my conscience stung with remorse for the woes my parents now endure for me—See me at this dismal midnight hour, torn from every pitying friend—alone—Oh that that were all!—worse than alone—exposed to the insults of a lawless, inebriated ruffian—trembling without a guardian to protect me—Oh my father! where, where are you now!—

You will, Priscilla—you surely will save me: though heaven has made you the rod of my chastisement, (I am—Oh, my God, I am humbled, and do repent me!) you will not, Priscilla, kill me quite, but hasten my deliverance—One moment, but one moment lost, may render every effort too late to save me; and then you may hereafter relent, and to no purpose lament your poor, your lost Amelia! Say but the word, and this impious woman, you have set my jailor, will favour my escape. Lord Winterton shall never know.—

They say, Priscilla, it was your necessity induced you to this wicked deception—How can that be! Affluence smiles on you: Mr. Blomer, (Oh my Lady! make that worthy man happy—'Tis now I revere his virtues!

Lord Winterton has taught me to distinguish worth!) Mr. Blomer leaves you independent of even his will to oblige you: but, could half my fortune have contributed to your ease or enjoyment, you knew your influence too well to doubt its command.

Yet what else—you had not pitched on this wretch for my undoing, but there was none other either low or wicked enough—Then, Priscilla, all he has promised for my misery, shall be doubled, trebled, to make me happy. Take half—all I possess, but snatch me from despair! The most inviolable secrecy shall guard your character—even from my own friends: I will continue to take all the blame on myself, as in the letter you made me copy before my sad departure. Lord Winterton, for his own sake, must be silent; and thus every requisite purpose you originally designed, more than answered, my ruin will, notwithstanding, be prevented, and my eternal gratitude shall bless you.

Write then—quickly write, and make me a happier creature than I ever was before: for now I know better how to value—But talk no more of titles, rank—of princesses and of fashion:—Priscilla, the scene is altered quite—and not one word in favour of Lord Winterton! Oh! how my soul abhors him! Adieu—and for heaven's sake assist me.

LETTER LIX.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

O H Mrs. Boothby! Both? What, both my children! One wretched with all her virtues; the other wretched, as soon as she must be, and undeserving too? And lost for ever to me? This, this is too much.—Forgive my distraction, heaven—I bow before thee—I arraign not thy decrees—I ask not why I am thus afflicted in that part where my soul lived—but while I bow, forgive a sorrowing mother!

Amelia—my lost, deluded child! Lord Winterton! the scorn of folly! and even shame blushes deeper at his name. I wanted to pursue her, to snatch her, if possible, from ruin; but her incensed father declares, were she only far as the door, he would not take the trouble to impede the inclinations that could prefer Lord Winterton, nor the will that for such a being could forfeit honour, duty, and every virtue under heaven.

Why did we trust her from our sight? My friend—I mean not—yet perhaps—forgive my foward heart. Alas! what power can check depravity, or bind folly in chains? To think wrong, is so near acting so, that nothing but a miracle can save misjudging minds.

Miserable girl! What, allied to so low, so fordid a wretch, must be her fate! Every thing

in his power—no settlement—But why think I of those things, when more material considerations—Should he, unprincipled as he is, ill-treat her? Ah! should she not then find an asylum in my bosom? But can nothing yet be done to save her? Is it yet too late? Perhaps, already she repents: perhaps she sees, she deplores her error—calls on her father—thinks on me. Oh my child! my child! Oh that it were possible, that she would relent, and fly to my open arms. Let Stoicks talk, let Pride, even Virtue condemn; these are not mothers! yes, my arms should open; my heart leap to receive my child. What noise? —Mira! One of my treasures restored me!—My God, I thank thee!—

* * * * *

Sweet balmy consolation to my aching heart! Oh whatever I have lost, let me not repine, whatever I feel, let me not murmur, while so much is left me, while I can thus enjoy it!

Has this dear girl suffered, my friend? Does any thing depress her beside her sister's unhappy story, and her interest in our cares; I scarcely think it possible; so serene, so indifferent to herself, so attentive, so alive to us! But for her faded cheek, (Ah, heaven) no other alteration: her eyes sparkle as brightly as ever, when they beam on us the sweet affections of her heart, and not a sigh escapes her.

When

When first we mentioned Grandby, “Forget him, Madam,” (said the angel), “think no more of Grandby, my father. While he was worthy your approbation, my heart prided in its distinction: but it will not long be pained (I trust it will not) by what it cannot honour; when innocence forbids its attachment: My only fear is lest you should think me more unhappy than I am. Too much have you already felt for me. Oh my father! believe me when I tell you, not a line in your letter tore my heart like that which spoke your anguish on my account. I can only thank you as I ought by restoring to my bosom the peace on which yours so kindly rests. Can I be otherwise than happy while blest in your affection?” (kissing a hand of either parent as she held them.) “Believe me but happy, and I shall indeed enjoy felicity.”—

I can perceive she designs, by degrees, to influence her father (with whom her power is immense) in favour of her sister: this only yet from a hint or two. He now can scarcely bear the subject from none but her at all: and he once checked her by declaring, from any lips but her’s, her sister’s name would be offensive: but, perceiving her disturbed, he added, “but from my Mira’s, even poison would be innocent.”—

And most gratefully do those lips dwell on the kind attention of our dear Mrs. Boothby.

What trouble have you had? Let not what you could not possibly prevent, affect you: unkind Amelia thus to return what not all your greatest merits could repay. Yet, with all her faults, all her ingratitude, I pine for my Amelia. Sir Charles bids me drive her from my heart, from my remembrance. Oh how these men can talk! Yet I see that with all his exerted philosophy, affliction bears heavy on him. If I knew she was happy—at least thought herself so—if—What shall I do? My Amelia—my lost child!

LETTER LX.

Lady Priscilla Blomer to Mrs. Howell.

NOT yet married! Still at ——! Woman, do you mean to ruin, to murder me? Do you not know to what I am liable, should this affair be divulged? And that its being Amelia's interest to be silent is the only possible way of avoiding eternal disgrace, infamy, ruin, and perhaps——For would I outlive a discovery?

And dare you talk to me of “checks, unlooked for perplexities, repugnances,” and such stuff! A silly girl's repugnance!

And you were awed by her new principles? Insolence! Talk no more of impediments. Let her instantly be married—any where—

by

by any body—any thing, so her silence is secured.

Wretch, villain, fool! How did he dare divulge—audacious treachery! Drunken sot! Could not his own interests keep him sober till 'twas no matter how he appeared? I have written to him; I have. Why was it incompatible with my own safety to accompany the girl? All then had gone well. Had she dared (whatever she dared to write) to talk to me in that manner? Idiot! I to be moved by her idle prayers against my own interests! I trust to her childish promises! Promises 'twould not be in her power to perform, were she mad enough to wish it. But I have answered her saucy letter. Altered indeed! Oh may Winterton, when my safety permits it, revenge me on the chit!

I have condescended to confession, to intreaty. What now would disguises avail? or threats signify, where I am not near enough to execute? There was a time when my influence was such, a frown would terrify, a smile prompt her to any thing. Curse on that fascinating fister, born to rob me of every power I possessed! and worse, who rises above my powers of revenge!

Remember, Howell, the enclosed letter you are to read yourself to Amelia. Trust it not a moment out of your own hands: return it to me with this. I will secure them myself. I will not have you burn them. Let-

ters may outlive the flames they were thrown to. Let me instantly know they are married —do—I cannot breathe in peace till then. Mind not her threats, her bribes: force her at any rate to immediate compliance. Quickly inform me of every thing that happens: but talk to me no more of impediments, or woe to Amelia—and double woe to you.—

This packet will be with you in a few hours. The man rides for life and death. Detain him only while you write.

L E T T E R L X I .

Lady Priscilla Blomer to Miss Eglinton.

AM I then, indeed, discarded from that dear bosom, whose affection for its Priscilla once constituted every felicity of her life! Cruel Amelia! Unhappy Priscilla, let thy life then be the sacrifice, since thy best loved friend desires it. And what have I done to deserve this treatment? Endeavoured to ensure you independence, honour, titles, wealth, pleasures, and—love! I have not aimed, indeed, to shackle your heart by the vain illusion of an hour, but by freedom.

Amelia, how have you suffered your sickened fancy to deceive you! Had Lord Winterton been himself the man I described, perhaps

haps loving him at first, you had by habit continued to love what custom had soon deprived of every real power to charm. Then you had been that very domestic creature we have so often deservedly despised and laughed at. Then had you been not only lost to an admiring world, that had died to resign to one selfish, monopolizing wretch the charms that all should idolize; but you had also been lost to me, to your Priscilla: for immersed within a narrow wretched circle of domestic cares, and unmeaning pursuits, society, pleasures, friendship—even sacred friendship itself, had fallen a martyr to a short-lived childish opinion you have lately unfortunately caught from a Mira, a Grandby—And now you may see the consequence of such romantic folly. To hear you talk of preferring their insipid conversations! How have they made me yawn with disgust and vexation! Would I had not forced you away from them; for experience had soon proved their inability to entertain you long? 'Twas only their strange out-of-the-way manner, the odd novelty of which for a moment engaged your attention. A few, a very few repetitions more had surfeited you, you could not have borne them much longer: especially when nothing else diversified the scene.—“I tore away those fine impressions!”—Ungrateful girl! not to thank my pains. What a poor, lost, repenting creature had you by this time been,
but

but for your pitying, kind, considerate Priscilla?

Heavens! that your coming to town, instead of dissipating the vapours that began to cloud you in the country, should only have increased them! and all because the scenes tired faster than they could be changed. Does not this evidently prove the greater necessity for more variety? Did not I often tell you, when complaining of weariness at plays, concerts, balls, and twenty things, while your sister enjoyed them all, the reason was because your livelier spirit required more frequent changes and a continual variety? If, then, all that the world could offer for your entertainment sufficed not, what would be your fate (recollect what once it was) pent up in your father's country house, or worse, infinitely worse, in that of a husband you either loved, or was beloved by. In the former case, how would perpetual cause of jealousy torment you? For think you, with all your superior beauty, you would not have perpetual cause of jealousy? Believe me (for few men, none but absolute idiots, are miserable Blomers) you would soon see deformity itself, because newer, and because it bore not the hated name of wife, preferred to all your charms! Suppose now the wretch loved you—(do I not speak, Amelia, from woeful, sad experience?)—what a life to be eternally followed about the house by the moping, whining, object of your scorn, and every

every motion abroad watched by insolent curiosity, and teasing distrust!

Bless, then, bless the happy fortune that saves you from either cruel situation, and doubly bless the faithful friend that fought and obtained that fortune for you. Do you dislike his person? Silly girl? it has perhaps saved you from an attachment that had imbibed all your life. His dissolute irregularities?—His age?—Blinded Amelia! do they not exempt your own little indulgences from observation, and promise your intire liberty the sooner?

Regard not my Lord's ridiculous threat of restraint in the hour of mistaking intoxication. How ignorant you are of the laws, Amelia! It will not be in his power to deprive you of the sole use of your fortune: is it not your own the moment you marry? You see even your father cannot touch it.

Lord Winterton only shares with you the splendour you will chuse to live in, and whatever you will allow him besides, will not only secure his good behaviour, and silence to your faults (we have all faults, Amelia,) but ever engage his gratitude. How very different things had been, were you united to a man of fortune! Then, instead of your being, as now, your own mistress, and your husband dependent on you, and even submissive to your will, you would be restricted in all your expences, and, in place of indulgence, rule, and independence,

pendence, but the mere slave of his tyrannic whims.

Your fortune needed no addition: all that was wanting to your happiness, was liberty, independence, title, rank, and power: all this I have now thrown at your feet. Spurn not away the treasures that court your acceptance, Amelia; embrace the proffered good, and be blest. Lose not, I beseech you, this most important hour. If it escapes you, it never returns again, and then, when you would catch it, 'twas fled beyond your reach, and nothing but vain repinings will be left you.

As to my own part, if I have gleaned some slight advantages, while securing your interests, surely Amelia will not blame me. In this only I have deceived you, and why? I would not disturb your enjoyments by the knowledge of the difficulties under which I labour: nor would I wound your delicacy by letting you even know you were relieving them. Hence I begged of my Lord Winter-ton to allow me the estate in Kent, without your knowledge (for I feared your too generous friendship only), till Mr. Blomer's affairs permitted me to refund the money. This, in his strange inebriation, he has raised to the dreadful charge against me, which my Amelia has had the cruelty to credit; and hence you may judge of the attention due to any other equally ridiculous assertion he may at the same time have made; as, for instance
his

his power to restrict either your pleasures or expences.

Indeed, Amelia, with all your wit and lively genius, you have a vast deal of simplicity, child, to suffer yourself to be startled thus by trifles and mere appearances. And now reflect, Amelia, how much 'tis in my Lord's power, if provoked by disappointment, to ruin me in the opinion of the world, by so base an imputation.

Reflect, too, on the risk (swayed by the tenderest affection, and the purest friendship only) I have run in interfering at all in your affairs. Perhaps it was imprudence; but when your happiness called, could I reflect on consequences? What was your being under age, to the affection knocking at my heart? What your being an heiress, to that sacred friendship that bade me snatch you from oppression, and tyrannic power?

And is it by my ruin, Amelia would now repay me? Can you behold your friend, your once-loved Priscilla, dragged before the ministers of justice for offences on your account committed? Can you behold the remnants of my shattered fortunes forfeited? my character lost for ever by a prosecution it would not be in your power to prevent? my very name degraded, and when my death (as soon it must; for, however innocent, could I outlive imputed infamy?)—and when my death had glutted my Amelia's cruelty, my name
(all

(all she had left her) the blush of my poor beggared child. Oh think, Amelia, think of my daughter, and, for her sake, Oh spare her mother's name, her reputation, honour, and her life!—

You mention Blomer. If you do indeed esteem him, then for his sake—would he survive?—Alas! you know not, Amelia, how he already suffers: but he most deservedly suffers. His mad affection, weak indulgence, has undone us all. Why did he permit what he was certain he never could afford? How did I know what his fortune could, or could not support? I believed all his feeble remonstrances the effect of avarice alone.

And now, Amelia, ruin hovers over us; and unless your generous friendship interferes, (even though you could shield me from your father's resentment,) it soon must crush us in its fall. But would my Amelia, by one noble effort, save her Priscilla—her child—Blomer—Blomer who bears her name, to whom Amelia owes all her prosperity, how would the exalted action do away whatever little repugnance now rises in her bosom! and, soon convinced of the advantages to yourself from the deed, mutual confidence, gratitude and love, would cement our firmer friendship, and happiness would crown it.

And now, Amelia, 'tis I that supplicate, that implore you by every tender appellation of friend, companion, sister—dear sister of my heart! Compassionate, relieve, and save the otherwise

otherwise undone Priscilla!—And, ah! Amelia, how could I now prevent your marriage with Lord Winterton? You are in his power. Will he be influenced by me to relinquish the prize he already possesses? Incense him not by showing a dislike that cannot now avail you. Neither ought you to wish to leave him now; your reputation would forever suffer: reflect, Oh reflect on that, Amelia—your reputation! Be wise, and consent at once, while you can oblige him with a grace. Think no more of retracting: it cannot, must not be. Heavens! Would I, her own Priscilla, give Amelia's honour such a stab as that of rescuing her now if I could! Forbid it friendship, prudence, virtue!—

LETTER LXII.

Mrs. Howell to Lady Priscilla Blomer.

YOUR messenger is just arrived—his horse in a foam—I fly to obey you, though nothing satisfactory yet occurs. Miss Eglington, after her letter was dispatched, (which I observed her copy while I finished mine,) continued in fullen silence, impatiently waiting your answer, on which she built all her hopes of deliverance. She would not even doze in her chair, as I advised on her still refusing to lie down; nor has she been prevailed on to eat a mouthful since her arrival: so your Ladyship

dyship may imagine this with her fatigue and anxiety has already injured her health. She does not condescend however to complain, but her looks alarm me.

At eight o'clock I desired my Lord to be called, but notwithstanding I pleaded his intimation of proceeding on our journey early, 'twas with the utmost difficulty I prevailed on his valet to venture on awaking him, as his violence is dreaded (particularly after a debauch) by every servant about him. He flew, as the man apprehended, into a rage at being roused, and threatened vengeance if disturbed again.

I heard him, and at the door of his apartment, reminded him of his intention, and of the dangers of delay. He called me busy fool—

"What was he afraid of? Was his friend arrived? Was he not to await him there? And how was he to employ the intermediate time? By squabbling with a noisy, saucy girl? Yet I would have remonstrated—

He heard me not—nor could I well hear myself for his bellowing snores that really frightened me away.

At twelve your letters arrived—On pretence of their being delivered to him, I would have again awakened him (for I am in terrors at this loss of time), but I might as well have ordered the winds to obey me, as the trembling wretches I addressed. As your Ladyship forgot to write on the cover your directions
about

about the letter, I unfortunately gave Miss Eglington hers before I looked over my own; and detained by the fruitless attempt to get my Lord's delivered to him, Amelia had already read and put hers up before I desired it back. I saw by her looks she was displeased at the contents—she asked me how I presumed to make her such a request?

Fluttered by the mistake my precipitation had caused, I inadvertently mentioned your orders: with a contemptuous smile she regarded me—

“ Why did she not blush to write, what she would fear to have seen !”

And then her eyes sparkling with indignation), “ And dares she write to me what she knows will not bear the light ! But I deserve it all—leave me, vile emissary of a still viler woman—you shall not have the letter.”

Indeed, Madam, notwithstanding your rebukes, I was afraid of insisting on her giving it up: but your Ladyship may depend on my getting it soon: she cannot much longer live without sleep; and then I can easily take it away.

In her present humour it would be imprudent to irritate her further, if it can well be avoided. I then asked, if she would write, or had any commands for Lady Priscilla Blomer?—

“ No more will I blot the spotless paper with her name, Tell her the woman who has the effrontery to make such a request, deserves more than the chastisement she apprehends. Tell her Amelia's dream is over, and however

however dreadful the certainty she wakes to, she will no longer accelerate her own undoing. Tell her, her arts are now as glaring as her crimes: that her colourings now can raise no other passions in my bosom but contempt and detestation; and that I hold myself absolved from every engagement I offered to make, and will use her infamous letter to her own condemnation."

Forgive me, my Lady, for such repetitions: you bade me be particular, and inform you of all that passes.—

A servant full speed—I tremble lest pursuit—No: he announces the approach of the long expected gentleman—My Lord depends greatly on his council. He is rising to receive him I hear. We shall now immediately proceed for Scotland, if Miss Eglington can be frightened into terms: if not, to the seat in Wales, where my Lord's Chaplain will be forced to perform the ceremony. All now will be hurry and confusion—I shall soon set your heart at rest, for my next will congratulate you on their marriage.

L E T T E R LXIII.

Sir George Lovemore to Edmond Grandby, Esq.

I MENTIONED an adventure in my last, Grandby—Gracious Heaven! an adventure indeed! Strange chance! so unexpected—

I told you, (have you received my last letter,

ter. Not a line from you this month !) I told you how vexed I was at being obliged to leave my nonsensical pursuit (ah, how trifling it now appears) at the call of a friend ; but I was afraid of informing you whom, or on what business : for well I knew you ever disapproved my connection with the one, and would be uneasy at the other. Had I but named Lord Winterton, you had immediately concluded no good could be in hand, where such a —— But I always found the more improper the connection, the greater the difficulty of shaking it off. Yet as he hinted this might prove a troublesome affair, one could not, you know, for that very reason quit a friend in distress. So swearing at the fellow's conscience, for obliging me to leave a mistress, to help him to a wife—if a wife is a punishment, my friend, (thought I) we'll soon quit scores : and so I promised to join him at the appointed place, though I rather exceeded the appointed time. Oh could I have foreseen—what power had a Townly possessed to detain me !—But listen, Grandby.

When I arrived at —— I was informed my Lord would see me in a moment—he was getting up : had been drunk the preceding evening. Abroad ! Drunk ! And a-bed till two o'clock of the day, at such a time as this, and on such—But let me not imprecate the sot. I thank him—from my soul I thank him.

The roads were dreadful—I had rode hard and was in a fine pickle to be sure to be introduced

troduced to a lady. I was shown into a back parlour, and my servant was soon at his business. While the fellow was combing the mud from my hair, and I was conning over a new lesson for my pupil at Bath, my whole attention was suddenly roused by Lord Winterton's voice in the next apartment. Had I heard his voice only, I should have thought him scolding his servants, a practice he sometimes condescends to. Grandby—judge of my astonishment when I overheard the following dialogue between him and the lady he was running off with !

“ So, Madam, I find you still continue obstinate, and not only refuse rest, but food. Well, well, 'twill bring your proud stomach down the sooner. But here's my friend, at last—your father that is to be : and now in a few hours, my lovely girl”—

“ My Lord, how often must I repeat, no power on earth shall ever force me to be yours ! ”

“ Pho—pho : give over this affected nonsense, and do not expose yourself before strangers, and, what is worse, shame me. Gad, George will laugh at me sufficiently as it is ; but what will he think of my being obliged to coax thus a silly girl, who ought to bless her stars she catches me in the humour, to descend from my ancient dignity, and raise her to a house never before allied to commoners. Come, I am sorry for what I said last night—you know I was drunk, and was drunk with joy :

joy: so, my pretty creature, forget it. Come, kiss and be friends."

" Monster! approach me not—Oh God, protect me!"

" Nothing can protect you now from my power. And now, hear me, imperious woman, and quickly take your choice—If you are wise, give over this opposition, ridiculous as vain. Pursue the design for which you fled from your family to me, and let us instantly away for Scotland. Repent your childish conduct, and I will yet forgive you: but if you chuse to persist any longer in this stubborn resistance, I carry you to Wales, where force shall make you mine; and by G—d, if you put me to the trouble, you shall pay for it all your life."

" I intreat you, Sir, not to put yourself to any further trouble on my account. I am sorry for that you have already had, and shall for ever deplore the errors in my conduct which put me in your power. But for mercies sake, my Lord, take not advantage of the situation into which I was unwarily betrayed by an impious woman, who, violating every tie of honour, confidence, and friendship, after seducing my affection from my family, and deceiving my thoughtless inexperienced youth, has thus led my unguarded steps to ruin, unless your hand at length generously extends itself to save me. Hear me—pity me, my Lord! by the honour of those ancestors you boast, I implore you not to wound your own

own eternal fame by an act that must for ever reflect dishonour on the name you bear, nor to violate the laws you are bound to support. By your hopes of happiness here, and of heaven hereafter, Oh do not—do not drive me to despair!"

" Foolish girl, cease your idle whining, nor tease me further. D—n me, one would imagine, to hear you, I was going to make a mistress, not a wife of you; and what the devil would you have? And d—n me—don't provoke me, or—not all your fortune shall save you—perhaps. By G—d! 'tis enough to drive one mad—Were you not dying for rank and title? and now—D—mn'd contradictory devils women are."

" My Lord, I own, and now blush for all my follies: but however differently I now think, there never was, there never could be a time, when I was so infatuated as not to have contemned whatever rank or title so low, so base a mind could offer."

" Very well, Madam, you are determined if love cannot spur me on, that fury shall. Speak, are you for Scotland or for Wales?"

" For neither, while I breathe—as I have already informed your mean mercenary in the letter I wrote her: though my vanity, disobedience, and weakness, have amply merited the punishment offended Heaven now inflicts on me, I will not add to my crimes, by consenting to my own disgrace and misery."

" Why

" Why then prepare for Wales."—And the wretch rang the bell: a squeaking female went in—he ordered her to assist in preparing the lady for her journey, while the sweet sufferer again attempted to soften his obdurate heart.

" Oh God ! What will become of me ! See me at your feet, my Lord, and Oh compassionate my youth—you own you do not love me; my fortune is alone your inducement—Be then my fortune yours, but let me not be forced to a union I detest. I have already offered you ten thousand pounds to release me, and will bind myself by every sacred tie to double the sum, or give you all I possess, rather"—

" Rise, Madam, and save yourself all needless trouble on a subject I am determined to pursue my own way. Your person as well as fortune shall be mine: the one shall satisfy my pleasures, the other my revenge: and d—n me if a little of the latter serves me now."

" Then murder me now, and satiate your vengeance on my life at once: but never, never while I live will I be yours. Oh Mrs. Howell! you are a woman: pity and assist an helpless wretch, though her own folly has undone her—for your sex's sake—Alas ! was it not a woman who betrayed my confiding love, and are you not the assistant of her horrid perfidy?—Oh my mother ! my dear, abandoned mother ! Did you now see your re-

pentant child; how would her sufferings change the tears you now shed for her ungrateful conduct, to drops of blood from your maternal bosom! And cannot you assist me? My father—where are you now to protect me? 'Tis now—'tis now I see my conduct in its real light. I repent—forgive me, Oh my father, and rescue your miserable daughter—O God! he hears me not—I have fled his protecting arms, and am lost"—

Here, Grandby, her voice failed, and I suppose she fainted: and long have you wondered at my patience, at my forbearance.—Do you think I was cool, unmoved? Oh! from the first moment I was fixed to attention; my blood boiled in my veins, and while the mourner, in a voice that struck on my heart-strings, poured out her anguish before the remorseless tyrant, I—Grandby, I cannot tell you how I felt—a thousand times I was going to rush on the wretch, and dash him at her feet—But I had been deceived—'Twas necessary to know more of the affair than he would chuse to tell me: his own words would most condemn him; my servant, who listened with me, could aid in prosecuting the villain, should the case require it: and at last, when my soul could no longer bear—I was too much affected—too much unmanned—I walked out into the garden, and recovering myself sent for Lord Winterton.

Without the least concern at the past scene, the fellow began a lecture on my delay—but the

the solemnity of my manner put him out a little. I informed him of the conversation I had just heard—

“ D——tion ! I thought you were above. Well, Sir, and what have you heard ? And in what have I deceived you ? Did I not tell you I was carrying off a girl of fortune under age ? ”

“ Against her own, as well as friends consent, my Lord ? ”

“ By G——d, 'twas with all her heart and soul ; and if she now turns squeamish, and relents in a whim”—

“ Would you marry a woman by violence ? one who neither loves, nor honours you as”—

“ D——n me, George, but I think you are turning prude too—What should I do with a wife that loves me ? 'Tis enough she fears me, and d——n me but she shall honour me. Pish, man, put off that sour face, and let's be jolly as we used to be. Come, let's dine, crack a few bottles, and march. Gad, we've lost so much time already, 'tis lucky they don't think her worth pursuing ; then what the devil need you trouble your head about her ? Come in, and”—

“ Stay, Sir ;—what you will, or will not be satisfied with in a wife, I do not trouble myself about ; but there seems to be something in this affair of too dark a nature for either my participation or silence. Love, my Lord,

is out of the question ; the lady seems to hate : and do you imagine, whatever your delicacy or conscience will allow you to do, I will ever assist in forcing her against her inclination to be yours, when she candidly owns herself to blame, and is thereby the greater object of compassion ? Nor shall she be the sacrifice of that unfortunate conduct she censures, while I can prevent it."

" And how the devil can you prevent it ? You won't betray the confidence I reposed in you, Sir ! D—n me, I thought you a fellow of very different mettle, or I had not selected you from as brave a set as ever beat a watchman, to accompany me on this expedition. Whether you know it or not, I intended you a compliment, and a mark of my friendship and respect, Sir ; but if you flinch at a little difficulty, instead of pursuing the enterprise with the keener spirit—why, d—n me, you may go to bed in safety, and I'll go on without you."

" All this is idle. Look you, Winterton, though I pretend to no sanctity, I never was a villain ; and, in a word, I will not quit the lady till I am satisfied. Let me speak to her. You say she consented to go off with you ; if this sudden change proceeds from terror, or only a whim, as you say ; surely such behaviour, such unmanly violence, is not the way to regain her confidence and favour. I'll go instantly and speak to her : if she can be

be prevailed on by fair means, depend on my support."

And in I went, followed by Winterton, swearing all the way at my impertinent meddling interference, and threatening vengeance if I encouraged his lawful wife that was to be to disobedience. He entered the room first, and with a half fearful, half important air, presented me as the friend who did him the honour to bestow on him the treasure he was just going to receive.—The Lord help me, Grandby—but what I felt at that moment, when, turning full upon me, an angel I never yet had an idea of, shot ten thousand arrows that tingled on my heart as many hitherto unknown sensations! Pain, pleasure, awe, hope, fear, and—and all that you once described—yes, just so, Grandby—“ Love, chastened beyond every idea—jealous of every wish that could arise to injure—all selfish interest giving way to her far dearer good”—Oh! exactly the very thing! I could have torn Winterton to atoms for daring to think of her, and, had she loved him, myself into as many for wishing him at the devil.—Injure her! ah, Grandby, which of the throbbing sensations of my heart that did not wish her well! And yet she thought I came to assist the savage in forcing her away. How my senses ached till she was undeceived! She flew from me to the farthest end of the room, and, clinging to the sofa—

" For God's sake, my Lord—Sir—I can not, will not go."—

" You shall not: no one shall force your will. For Heaven's sake, be composed: while I have life, nothing shall harm you."—

What a look she gave me! terror, doubt, hope—

" And will you save me! Oh blessings on your tongue! Will you indeed save me! Or do you only delude me with false expectations, to put me more securely in that man's power? You are his friend, and came"—

" I did; but he deceived me: I thought 'twas with your own consent;—I believed you loved him, or never"—

" I love him! Only look at him"—

" D——n! What do you mean, Sir George? Pray, Madam, did you not come with your own consent? Can you deny that?"

" Ah, no! but I did not know your vices,—nor your character—nor what an ugly"—

" Very pretty, truly: and why did you not stay till you did? And do you suppose, that, after all the expence and trouble"—

" My Lord, I will indemnify you for all the expence you have been at, as I promised, and am sorry"—

" D——n your sorrow, and me too, if I pocket such affronts, or suffer myself to be jilted."—

" Stop Sir, this is not language for a lady's ear."—But, Grandby, something (conscience perhaps) bid me play fair. " As you were acquainted, Madam, with my Lord's person and

and character before your flight to his arms, whence this sudden antipathy to what you so lately favoured?"

A blush, "celestial rosy red," showed what the lustre of that cheek would be, when not faded by the pale hue fatigue and sorrow had left for what they stole away, though distress had added a more touching beauty. Her eyes fell; then raising their trembling rays to my face, she burst into tears—"Ah, Sir!"—and again was silent. Oh Grandby, what horrors did I not then feel! Her tears!—But whatever I felt, I was determined to deserve—not to forfeit—What am I saying?

"Alas, Madam, though my Lord's honour should release you from the engagement you now repent; yet yours"—I stopped—to plead against my own hopes—I would have given worlds to have been a thousand miles off: for, Grandby, though not a Winterton, I never had your virtues.

"Ah, Heaven! his honour release me! Then I am yet devoted to destruction! Then you will not protect me? You will not be my friend?"

"Your friend! protect you! Oh I would die to serve you!" She coloured at the earnestness, the tenderness of my manner.—

"Does he not tell you plainly," said the audacious fellow, "you are engaged beyond the power of fate to release you? He shan't, he can't protect you; so prepare immediately."

"Nay, my Lord; but if the Lady wishes—you can't oblige her to fulfil—Oh why,

when did you not love him, did you promise him your hand?"

" I was vilely ensnared."

" Ensnared! My Lord, if there has been any unfair proceeding, you cannot—But tell me, Madam, how ensnared? Were you not well acquainted with my Lords"—Was this quite fair, Grandby?—I again stopped.

" Oh Sir! I see you are ignorant of my sad, sad story. And how shall I inform you of the wretched errors that led me into the snare I now deplore? Yet rather than you should believe I ever favoured—I ever could favour—rather"—(Oh Grandby, the sweet confusion!)—" rather than forfeit your protection by the mistake—I'll expose all my shameful follies—but will you not then despise me? Will you not leave a worthless creature not deserving your attention—your assistance, to her merited ill fortune?"

Winterton tried to interrupt her—had he not been silenced by my furious looks, I would have turned him out of the room.

" Proceed, dear Madam, I am all impatience—all"—Another blush hung heavy upon her cheek; she tried to hide it in her bosom."

" I never saw—I never beheld Lord Winterton—till I met him at this place."

Amazement held me dumb! What could I think of a woman who could thus—for a moment I was villain enough to question the virtues I wished to adore as the counterpart of the beautiful form before me; and was almost

most sorry at an explanation, that, however releasing it might prove, made so much against her. Winterton stormed, but to little purpose. Naturally a coward, his conscience made him more so.

"I see your astonishment, Sir. What an opinion must you have of me! I was indeed a vain, a weak, a giddy girl; and now see all in the same light that you do, nor can you contemn me more than I contemn myself. Nay, I have not a shadow of excuse to mitigate my conduct; for such examples before me of virtue, sense, goodness—of every excellency on earth, none but a blind, infatuated fool had beheld in vain. Then how they loved me! how they counselled, implored me! Oh my parents—my sister! perhaps by this I've broken all your hearts; but if yet you live, vile ungrateful wretch as I am, could you but know how I have suffered, how repented, and deplored my black offences, you would forgive me."

"But how, Madam, since you never had seen Lord Winterton, were you induced—By Heaven, my Lord, if you interrupt me again—Does your guilt fear the light?"

" Ah, Sir! my fatal confidence in a dissembling, artful woman, was the mischief which first led to my present ills. Too well prepared, as I was, for every trifling impression, she gained an entire sway over my unsuspecting heart, and used it to my ruin. 'Twas this false friend, who, after prompting my dis-

obedience, almost by force obliged me to consent to this dreadful step, which, believe me, Sir, I repented before I found the man, to whom her cruel perfidy had made me the prey, the very reverse of him she had described."

Grandby, did you ever hear of so impudent, so atrocious a deed! and do you suppose when the dear imprudent (the tears streaming down her lovely face) besought my pity and protection, I hesitated now to offer my immediate aid to conduct her to her friends? How was my heart affected by her greatful rapture! I never felt so elated in my life. Independent of every interest of my own, the power to ease and make her happy, poured so sweet a torrent of delight over my bosom, that 'twas some time before I could attend to the brute, ('twas fortunate I did not then know all, or perhaps I had not mastered my transported passion,) who continued to throw out threats and defiance. The dear girl, on his attempting to lead her away, flew panting with terror to my arms, that of themselves opened to receive her. Oh the sweet possession! I believe—I think, Grandby, I pressed it to my throbbing heart—Was that wrong, Grandby? I would not offend her for worlds! But now, my friend, prepare for the electrical shock that almost deprived me of my senses.

While Winterton stood staring, and almost choaked with venom at seeing me incircling thus the treasure he had imagined his own,—
“ Save me, generous stranger, save me from his

his tyrannic power," cried the trembling girl, still clinging to my arm, and looking earnestly up in my face: "my thanks are poor; but when my preserver shall be known, undeserving as I am, those of a mind worthy of your regard shall be poured in gratitude before you for this wonderous deliverance of his daughter. When Sir Charles Eglinton shall thank you"—

Heavens! Grandby, what a discovery was here! I was never so strangely affected in my life, and could not now prevent the tears, that before stood ready in my eyes, from streaming down my face. I started at the name of Sir Charles Eglinton, while with equal wonder she beheld my emotion.

"Is it possible! Is it Miss Eglinton I behold! Amelia! The daughter of the amiable pair whose characters I have so long revered! The sister of the angelic Mira! of my Grandby!"

And I could not say a word more for the odd kind of things struggling about my heart. But my Lord beginning to be troublesome again, I addressed myself to him.

"Sir, if you think yourself worth your care, I advise you to decamp while you can. You are not entitled to any consideration from me, whom you had like by your hypocrisy to have led to a crime, for which I had never forgiven myself, if by Miss Eglinton's aversion I had not been saved its perpetration. My Lord, could you mean this lady, when you informed me your only reason for concealing your

your marriage from her father was because you would not condescend to ask her from a family so far beneath your own, lest, presuming on their upstart wealth and your inferior fortune, they might affront you by rejecting your alliance? Sir Charles Eglinton's family! Equally ancient with your own! whose alliance is so courted by the first ranks in the kingdom! And Miss Eglinton the heiress of such a fortune! Fly, my Lord, fly while yet 'tis in my power to favour your escape; and send immediate notice of her danger to your infamous accomplice, to Lady Priscilla Blomer, and let her, ere the laws can reach her, also seek security by flight."

'Twould be difficult to tell which shewed most amazement at my seeming so well informed of things, particularly of Lady Priscilla's agency. Lord Winterton, though evidently disconcerted, yet, supported by pride and rage, still blustered, and left the room to form new plans. Amelia's fear alone had hitherto kept her from sinking; but the sudden turn in her favour, joy, gratitude, eagerness to be carried to her friends, with the solicitude she shewed to soften her errors in my opinion, (Oh Grandby, how these bashful little efforts charm me!"') were too much for her exhausted frame: she turned pale as death—her eyes sunk—and all their lustre fled: The fainting sufferer saw my terror, and smiling told me she believed she had done wrong: she had not taken any sustenance since her arrival, and very little the day

day she left London. When I was flying to order some light nourishment, she called after me.

"Don't leave me—he'll return and take me."—

"I will not quit sight of the door, and will instantly give directions about your removal."

"But do not go near him, he will murder you: you don't know what a man he is. I thought he would have killed me twenty times, he looked so dreadful."

I assured her of my care of myself also, if only to serve her: but as I was speaking to my servants in the hall, I suffered an ugly squinting beldam to enter the room, supposing her to be Amelia's attendant. Soon after, hearing her scream, I rushed in, and caught the insolent woman taking some papers from Miss Eglington's pocket, whose weak situation, added to her natural delicate strength, allowed very little resistance to the big-boned brawny hag. I tore the packet from her, and jerked her to the other end of the room. She began to snuffle implorings.—

"You need not fear discovery, (said Amelia,) this gentleman knows all about Lady Priscilla; tho' I did not mention her name. Perhaps her friend Lord Winterton told him too every thing when he was drunk, for then he always tells truth."

Again

Again the masculine creature in my presence attempted the papers I had delivered back to Amelia, who now putting them into my hands, begged me to keep them, or Mrs. Howell would take them away, and she wanted to shew them to her mother, from whom she never would disguise any thing in future, and 'twas necessary every particular of this unhappy affair should be known to her parents, that they might better determine how far she was culpable, and how far her weakness merited indulgence: "But you may tell your patroness, (added the generous girl,) that, if after so faulty a conduct, I preserve any influence, it shall be exerted in her favour as far as silence extends: for as to any thing more than forgiveness from me, she never must expect it: Amelia's future friendship's must be directed by judgments less liable to err than hers."

Is this the flighty Amelia you so often censured, Grandby! Yet then you knew not the lengths—but her faults were not her own—see now, when left to itself, how her naturally noble disposition acts! It has only been awakened, not changed, by misfortune, punishment, experience—and blest be the power who led me at such a moment to her feet! Will you not be my friend, Grandby? You will—and much I hope from your interest and influence in your Mira's family. You need not fear me now, Grandby: I think already
in

in a quite different manner from what I did a few hours ago. Often have I laughed at what I once believed the poet's mere whim in the sudden metamorphose of Cimon—If ever there was a Cimon in the world, 'tis your friend. Just such a flow of new ideas each moment expand in my hitherto uninformed and savage bosom.

I asked Miss Eglington's leave to read those letters —

“ You have a right to see them if you wish it; I owe every thing—even my life to you: for I never had consented to be that horrid man's wife, so he would have killed me in revenge I suppose. But do not expose Lady Priscilla's conduct: her husband is a worthy man, and her poor little girl!—Then I once thought her my friend, and loved her, dearly loved her.”

Grandby—the abandoned woman! More abandoned than ever you had reason to believe her. Those letters have almost drove me mad! Amelia is an angel—always was an angel—though her virtues were hidden by this fiend of darkness from the light. Oh how her soft complainings melt my soul! Curse on the wretch that was deaf to them!

When Miss Eglington had from my hand received some nourishment, a heavy drowsy disposition came on: she tried to shake it off, and, I saw, apprehended being carried to another apartment. I persuaded her to lock herself

herself in, and repose on the sopha, while I waited her awaking in the adjoining room, from whence I could hear every stir in the room she remained in: and my servant was placed sentinel at the door to call me if any dared approach it.

And here I have been writing while my Amelia sleeps.—“Your Amelia, Lovemore?” Did I not tell you long ago, Grandby, she should be mine? Oh I prognosticated well—Blockhead! I did not then know how to think. Why, Grandby, when she was afraid of remaining alone, did I not dare ask her to repose on my bosom while I watched her? What harm had there been in it? I would not have even pressed her to it, if—if I could have helped it.

What the devil is Winterton about? I do not fear his resistance, for I’ve a dozen armed servants, and two or three chosen friends ready to conduct my Amelia to her father, the moment she awakes. She has slept (blessings on her slumbers!) near three hours, and ‘tis time to set off, as I mean to carry her to-night, (she shall not stay another in this house,) as far on her way home as Lord Butler’s (a relation you know,) whose amiable lady and daughter will be happy in offering Miss Eglington every attention in their power. From thence she may write to prepare her friends for her unexpected arrival. Thank Heaven there is no danger, when the truth shall be known, but her reception will be such as she deserves:

deserves : yet the sweet agitated girl trembles with apprehension.

You shall soon hear further ; but why the devil do you not write to me ?

Adieu, friend of my heart—drawn nearer to it by this unexpected event ; for, Grandby, I will not let a doubt come near me—Adieu, wonder and rejoice with

Your LOVEMORE.

Sir George Lovemore, in Continuation.

O H, Grandby ! What an escape ! Amelia—my Amelia might have been murdered by the furious Winterton—And how murdered ! (I shudder as I write it) by saving me from the intended blow !

Soon after I closed my letter, Miss Eglington waked, but though she still complained of sickness, and a swimming in her head, was very impatient to be gone. Every thing was ready, and I was leading her to the carriage, when Lord Winterton calling out just as we got to the door—“ One word, Lovemore”—we both suddenly turned, when the villain, now within reach, made a lunge at me with a short sword concealed behind him. Amelia first perceived it as he raised his arm, and throwing herself before me, received the stroke, aimed at my breast, in the back part of her shoulder : but, Heaven be praised, her stooping

ing posture, the extension of her arm, and the thick cloak she was wrapped-up in, glanced the sword off so near the surface, that 'tis only a little flesh wound: but even when I was convinced it was no more, the agony I felt had not been greater had the stroke pierced my heart.—Judge then while I was uncertain of her fate—Heaven guard me from such another moment!

The diabolical design was, when I fell, to carry off Amelia through a back gate, where a postchaise was in readiness to fly. At the same instant my Lord struck, he took hold of her, and a man was approaching to aid in bearing her away: but her screams, together with my calling out aloud for help as I held her with one hand, and with the other took up the sword the wretch let fall in his confusion when he found he had missed his aim, brought my people (who were waiting without) in numbers about us. Not knowing what had happened, (it was now dark,) for I believed his sword had passed under my arm as I raised it to guard Amelia; I was pursuing the traitor, who fled towards the garden: but hearing the dreadful words of—"Oh, my God, she's wounded!"—I dropped the weapon; for even the additional vengeance they excited died within me at the sounds. They had torn off her cloak, and though the lights now discovered the sleeve of her riding-dress covered with blood, her lovely delicacy
 (strange

(strange men about her) was resisting their intreaties to draw off her jacket. "She was not hurt—'twas nothing"—And catching my arm as I stood motionless with horror before her, "Thank God! (said she,) he is not murdered—don't be frightened—let's go—for Heaven's sake let's go."—

She fainted as she spoke—While they carried the lifeless angel into another room, (I know not what I was about all the while,) one of my friends, who had flown for a surgeon on hearing she was hurt, now returned with one, who fortunately lived near, and considerately brought a woman also, whom he saw in the house. The habit was cut from the cape round the shoulder, and the surgeon (as I stood trembling at the door) pronounced the wound a mere scratch: perhaps in compassion to me; for I since learn it is an ugly gash, though not of other consequence than the immediate pain.

Charming heroine! how she bore it! Grandby—how have you all mistaken Amelia! The wound was dressed, cordials were administered, and Amelia again urged her departure from a place she declared she could not support the sight of one moment longer. I wished to obey her, but dreaded, notwithstanding the surgeon's consent, the consequences of fatiguing and hurrying her oppressed spirits more. She persisted, and we set off for Lord Butler's—Miss Eglinton and I in

I in a post chariot, and our friends and servants armed on horseback around us; though I supposed Winterton and his gang at that time twenty miles off. In fact, we have heard nothing of him since.

There are situations, Grandby, that bring minds closer in one moment, than the common course of things would accomplish in years—Miss Eglinton had thrown herself between me and death—perhaps she had involuntarily done so for any fellow creature in the like situation: and perhaps she was particularly shocked at the idea of my falling a victim to my exertions in her defence—But this was not the hour of reflection—of remembrance—and—and I could not help being impressed with—In short, I had been terrified, affected—and was now softened beyond all command of myself, and all consideration for her:—so as soon as the chariot drove off, I found myself on my knees before her, bathing her hand with my tears, and lamenting the accident she had suffered, while I did not dare to praise her generous conduct, nor even to thank her for the life she had given me.

She had suppressed the passions that must throughout such a scene have filled her heart—sympathy set them flowing; and her tears now eased their oppression. Without speaking she attempted to raise me: I feared the exertion of her arm, and seated myself by her side. She was weeping—was in distress—in pain,

pain, in pain for me—My very soul was dissolved ! I dreaded the jolting of the carriage, and threw my arms round to support her. She needed support, Grandby, and if she did not actually faint, she must more than once have been very near it—and I at times could not hear her breathe, while at others she seemed with difficulty to breathe at all.

In this manner, (all silence on her part, and scarce a word on mine,) we reached Lord Butler's house. The family had been prepared by a hurrying note I had dispatched in the morning, and were every moment expecting our arrival. Miss Eglington, pale as the paper before me, was carried in, and could scarcely answer the tender enquiries made by the ladies, who were deeply interesting themselves about her : but when I briefly informed them of what had just happened—(imputing her wound to Winterton's erroneous arm, not to her —Oh, Grandby ! when I think of it, and is not that continually ?) all then alarmed, and compassionating the sweet sufferer, (who was leaning back; almost lifeless, on a sopha,) advised her being immediately put to bed, while a physician was sent for. She could not stand—Oh, when they bore her away—passive, silent—when Miss Butler returned, and told us she had fainted while undressing—that her mother thought her very ill—and when the doctor, on visiting, declared her in a fever—Grandby, were you ever truly wretched?

wretched? If you have not been very, very wretched, you cannot conceive my condition.

Lord Butler, as it would be impossible to remove Amelia, advised my immediately writing to Sir Charles Eglington: I preferred addressing myself to the mother, notwithstanding your character of the father's tenderness and affection: for the humanity of a woman is seldom restrained by other laws than its own feelings.

I informed her Ladyship with the strictest truth of every particular; only giving the manner of Amelia's receiving the hurt the same turn I had before to the Butler family, and rather (not too much to alarm her) making lighter of her daughter's indisposition than her situation warranted.

How little do giddy, thoughtless young fellows, (such as I was not long ago, Grandby,) consider the consequences of even their slightest indiscretions—You cannot imagine the shame, the confusion, the fear I feit, while writing to the mother the purpose that brought me to her daughter's deliverance. Lord Winterton's friend! The chosen friend, pitched on by him as the fittest assistant in an enterprize like this! Would it have been an innocent exploit, though such as he described it? And did he not depend on my known character as a man of pleasure, to reconcile with ease the truth when discovered? And even to abet his villainous design of forcing her hand when she repented? A noble introduction

trodition this into a family where one would wish to appear with advantage! A Charming recommendation this to Lady Eglington's favour—the rake who was to have planted a dagger in her heart by giving her daughter to a libertine! nay, who still designs it—only transferring her from one to another. Well might I blush and tremble as I wrote.

True, appearances are more against me than I merit—Blockheads that we are! above the fear of censure, nay, often emulous of worse names than we deserve; away we drive before the wind, and then dreaded by every family that has the least regard for their daughters interests and welfare, we are contemned—rejected—and, too late, would give a limb for that character we sported in vain pursuits, that now appear as insignificant and worthless to ourselves. Would Winterton were at the devil for the scrape he has brought me into—yet was it not that that saved Amelia! 'Twas lucky for poor George though, he determined to refuse her before he *looked*, or what narrow, selfish interests might not have been ascribed as the motives which influenced his conduct? My heart is conscious of honour in this affair—yet I am horribly afraid I shall look like a downright ninny when I first appear in the awful presence of Sir Charles Eglington and his lady.

Will you not be my friend, Grandby? Sweet are the hopes your very name throws over my bosom! You love me, Edmund—but

but little consolation should I derive from your interest, did you only love me—By Heaven, I will deserve more—I will reform—I am already reformed.

I did not go to bed after sending off my letter to Lady Eglington, but sat with my door open, listening to every stir—The family will soon be up; I am wild to learn what a night my Amelia——I hear the servants; but they cannot inform me—Miss Butler was to sit up with the attendants, and all is yet quiet on that side.

* * * *

She has passed a restless night Grandby—is still feverish; but (Oh may it be propitious!) is now fallen into a sound sleep. I'll now close my letter; for—I'm disturbed, anxious, tired—and cannot rest a moment—If this is love—yet I would not part with one of the pangs I feel, for all the torpid ease I once thought I enjoyed! Is not this very strange, very unaccountable, Grandby? What a puppy I used to think you—and now am almost one myself.

In the name of curiosity and wonder, what are you about, Grandby! Will you never write to me again? Or does that pain in your head continue? No—you would let me know it by a line at least. But you are agitated about Amelia—her parent's troubles—your Mira's affliction—You cannot spare a moment from your soothing attendance on my
Amelia's

Amelia's sister—By this, my letter has relieved you both, and the kind Boothby family.

Let not what has happened disturb you: Amelia will soon recover the effects of her fatigues and fright, and new joys will gild our happy hours.

LETTER LXIV.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

O H my friend! What wonderful news! My Amelia, my child is not married to the vile Winterton. She was betrayed into his hands by the still viler Lady Priscilla, and has been rescued from the barbarous wretch (whom she had never before seen, and detested when she did) by a generous stranger, who, at the hazard of his life, bore her from the lawless monster that otherwise had forced her to be his wife. That his life was in danger I only infer (for he mentions the circumstance slightly) from his saying my darling girl, on Winterton's attempting to hinder her departure, received by the erring sword (my God!) a little hurt in the shoulder, of no other consequence than the fright it occasioned, which, added to the fatigue she had before undergone, rendered it imprudent to indulge her ardent desire to fly for pardon and protection to her parent's arms.

Good Heaven! What might it not have been? Blest be the power who preserved her life, and saved her from the savage machinations of her enemies! Yet why Lady Priscilla—I must have patience—'tis all a mystery—yet how the infatuated girl consented to become the wife of a man she had never even seen, is the most astonishing of all!—Sir George Lovemore delicately insinuates, that when the affair is explained, the appearances of error in Miss Eglington's conduct will nearly vanish, and that the rest she so sensibly feels, he only fears our being too much affected by her generous self-accusation.

This is the very Sir George Lovemore Mr. Mordaunt mentions in his letters on the subject of the unhappy lady in Oxfordshire: he is a wild, dissipated young man, and his connexions with Lord Winterton, and participation in such an affair, (though he takes some pains to convince us of the deception used to engage him in it,) evidently prove his faulty morals. Yet we owe him much—he was the preserver of our child, and most gratefully do we feel the obligation. Thank Heaven, Lord Winterton was deceived in him!—Had he been as abandoned as he supposed him, he would not have pitied and relieved the suffering girl.

This day gives to Sir William Barville his beloved Helena—Mira was with her early, and knows not yet of her sister's fortune. I received

received (just as I was preparing to follow) Sir George's letter, accompanied by a very polite one from Lady Butler (with whom he deposited his charge), filled with the tenderest assurances of care and attention to the dear unhappy wanderer. Her Ladyship too softens her conduct, and answers for her being in future all we can wish her. Alas! my friend, what can be expected from one who thus could—But I think now of the present only—I have found my lost child! She has been most miraculously snatched from dishonour, misery, and even death—and I bless the God who restores her to me, when I had not a hope remaining! The future too is in his hand, and in him I will confide. Sir Charles is all grateful transport too: yet he can command his feelings. He will not accompany me to his offending daughter; but I can think of nothing but of straining her once more to my fond, fond bosom! Sir Charles will explain every thing to Mira. I know she would wish to go with me to her sister, but 'twould be cruel to leave her friend. Why should I distress her by dividing her inclination? When I am gone, she will not have a choice to make. The chariot is ready—I fly—and my Amelia will return with her rejoicing mother.

Lady Eglington, in Continuation.

OH that merciful power who chastizes but to bless, and afflicts that good may come of

I 2 it!

it! Is not my Amelia every thing that is sweet, and good in nature? And did I ever love her as at this dear moment? Lady Priscilla my friend!—Lady Priscilla!—That a woman should be so lost to decency, as well as virtue!

I was received by this truly worthy family, not as a stranger, but as a long-loved friend, in whom every individual in it had an interest: and the graceful youth to whom we were so obliged, with an affecting emotion in answer to my grateful thanks, besought me not to dash the happiest hour of his life that put it in his power to serve us, by remembering the purpose which gave the opportunity.—Amelia was in bed—I was alarmed—and they would not let me fly to my child till she was prepared—Oh, Mrs. Boothby! she had been very ill, was still very weak, and trembling with fear and apprehension, though desiring to rise, and be carried home. But when I saw her so pale—so altered by her sufferings and remorse—when I clasped her in my arms, and received a shower of repentant tears on my bosom, what a conflict it sustained between agony and joy! But when she spoke—“And it is my mother! Does she descend to come to her ungrateful, undutiful Amelia! Can she indeed forgive the wretch so lost to herself and to her friends—such friends!—But I never knew their worth, their value, till deprived of them. I pined for them

them then, and my heart almost broke with its weight of sorrows. A very few hours more had broke it quite: but Heaven, (not for mine, for I deserved punishment,) for your sakes, sent me a deliverer, who" —

The dear girl hesitated, and gratitude flushed with a transient bloom her pale cheek. In short, my beloved friend, she is no longer the same Amelia: her manner too, her very stile is altered with her sentiments. But you will not wonder they should have been so very reprehensible, when you learn the particulars of Lady Priscilla's artful wiles to seduce and ensnare an unsuspecting mind, weakened by a faulty education, prepared for deception, and unprotected by the inherent guards of virtue and religion. I have not yet recovered the shock her story gave me, intermixed as it was with self-condemnation and entreaties for forgiveness. Nor was I a little astonished or delighted with her sensible remarks, and the nobly generous principles she discovered in regard to her once loved friend. I dare not trust myself with the relation, and yet shudder at the dangers past. But Mira (for her sister is not yet well enough to write herself) has promised to inform you of every particular, and to send you copies of Amelia's letter, (the sweet creature, Oh had I known what she endured !) and the hardened woman's answer.

Amelia was so relieved by my assurances of forgiveness, and promises for her father's,

that, composed and comforted, she slept all night in peace, and the next morning was able to rise, though we were prevailed on by our kind hospitable hosts not to depart that day; for yet the poor child could scarcely walk, and the wound is still very painful. My friend, the frightful gash! Though not deep, the sword tore up the flesh. My heart sickens as I write—I fainted when first I saw it. Amelia always blushes when 'tis mentioned—Sir George too—they cannot give a clear account of the matter: no wonder, all must have been confusion at the time.

There was something very conscious in this young gentleman's address whenever he spoke to me: it was not long before I perceived the reason: as soon as Amelia appeared, the impression she had made on him would have been visible to the most common observer. There was an embarrassment too in her manner when she first came down. I cannot believe he was influenced by any views of his own in the service he rendered her; for he seems to have a generous mind, and I think mentioned his having declared to Lord Winterton his determination to interfere, before ever he saw her. Yet, on recollection, how could that be? for how till he conversed with her, did he know her distress? Then is it probable Winterton would have concealed the lady's name and family from the valued friend he so depended on? I begin to suspect
—there

—there is something very laboured in the pains he takes to explain this part of the affair, and he does not seem satisfied that 'tis clear himself.

Ha!—Did you not write that Grandby's behaviour, on being questioned about Amelia's flight, was dark and mysterious? I thought not of it at the time—Sir George took an opportunity to tell me Grandby was his bosom friend: I knew from Mr. Mordaunt's information they were acquainted, but had I still the interest I once possessed in Mr. Grandby, it had afforded me no pleasure to find he had formed so intimate a connection with one of Sir George Lovemore's character. I wondered at his naming him to me, and asked had he heard lately from his friend? He had not: so I imagine him yet ignorant of the breaking off. Sir George must be well acquainted with the reason, for he often sees the poor lady. These libertines believe it a point of honour to keep each other's counsels, and as Lovemore informed me he concealed nothing from his Edmund, I make no doubt but that hypocritical young man had learned something from him of Amelia. There was a time he would have been the last I had believed guilty of concealing on any pretence a thing of such serious, such important consequence—And Mira's sister!—our child!—but where, when the mind permits itself to stray, will it say—Here will I stop.

Whether Sir George was swayed by magnanimity alone, by passion, or by both, our obligation can never be overpaid, but by the one sacrifice, which, should he hope it, would render its having been ever conferred of no avail. Though I am far from making comparisons between him and the unprincipled Winterton, yet, whatever Sir George's other qualifications may be, the want of morals, or acting in defiance of their precepts, can never be overlooked by those who really love their children; nay, vice, when so cloathed, ought to be dreaded most.

I never saw more alluring graces than Sir George Lovemore possesses. Though he pleases in a different manner, he is as finely formed and as speciously endowed, as Grandby, and, like him, was born to captivate and command without our leave, or seeming to design it, the hearts that yield before him. Judge then, my friend, if I have not reason for my fears about Amelia.—Her heart, turning with horror from a disgusting object, relieved from its terrors by the very contrast of what it loathed, opened by gratitude, bounding with hope and joy, and exposed by tender and interesting situations—Oh what a dangerous moment! I have questioned her—with a sweet ingenuous simplicity, and blushing hesitation, she told me all she could remember. She believes, when she saw the sword rising to destroy her deliverer, she tried to prevent its reaching his

his breast. "For it had been a dreadful thing, you know, Madam, to have him die before my eyes, while so generously defending me! I should never have forgiven myself."

"Did this occur to you, my love, at the moment?"

"No, Madam," looking down, and colouring, "there was no time for thought—but—but I was terribly frightened."

"Did Sir George thank you for preserving him, Amelia!"

"Oh no;—I do not believe he thinks I did. Did he not say, 'twas done by mistake in the confusion?"

This was sweetly delicate, Mrs. Boothby; for I make no doubt Sir George knew better, and made what inferences best pleased him too. Indeed the whole of his conduct (tho' love peeped out in every thing) has been uniformly noble, generous, delicate, and manly; yet, is he not—a libertine? Tell me not of reforms:—they may sometimes succeed:—but 'tis a dangerous trial. The mind, once enveloped in vice, whatever it intends, cannot easily shake off long favourite habits, and, the novelty of the moment over, mechanically wanders to its beaten tracks, and again delights in its accustomed attachments.

But for this—Grandby too—Oh, were these young men spotless within, as in every thing else they are accomplished, elegant, and lovely; how desirable—how happy—My darling

girls! are they both to be unfortunately attached, while scarcely reason can wonder, or virtue blame them!

Amelia declares she will no more depend on herself, but promises in every thing to make her sister her example; and I see she may now be trusted.

Did you behold these sisters now, Mrs. Boothby—twins indeed! Surely—surely we cannot regret what has made a *Mira* of *Amelia*! Yet, independent of the anxiety her conduct has cost herself and us, and the variety of woes that, but for the divine interposition, might have followed; when we consider how a young lady's reputation must suffer from so rash, so mad a step! this was a stab, which, though not mortal as it promised, yet leaves a dreadful scar behind. Amelia feels it too; and therefore we hide from her our apprehensions.

Then how to proceed with the delinquents—Sir Charles is for making them public examples, but that would expose our child's imprudence to the world, and she earnestly begs Lady Priscilla may not be punished for what she never had attempted, but for the follies which encouraged her proceedings. And then her family—her husband, though blinded by affection, a worthy man, and the near relation of my late brother—of my sister, to whom Amelia owes so much—Yet what an encouragement to vice, to let it pass unnoticed!

noticed! Advise us, my friends: what shall, what ought we to do?

Loaded with civilities, we yesterday morning left our new acquaintances, promising to cultivate a friendship so interestingly begun. Miss Butler and Amelia, equally charmed with each other, are to be very intimate. The wary bird, still fluttering from the snare, asked my leave and advice: I readily consented. A young lady with such examples before her, and so finely educated, must merit the commendations she receives from all who know her.

"Oh Madam," said Amelia, "what a sweet substitute for Lady Priscilla! I love her dearly already."

How open youth to every new impression! Pity the noblest virtues of the mind should ever be betrayed.

Sir George Lovemore, with three other gentlemen who guarded my runaway on her second escape, accompanied us on horseback till within sight of the Hall, but could not be prevailed on to favour us further, and alight. Perhaps our young hero thought it might look like going to receive the thanks so due to his prowess. He's a fine fellow, Mrs. Boothby, for all—Ah, my poor Amelia! when even her mother almost shuts her eyes to his faults!

He asked my permission at parting soon to enquire of Miss Eglington's health. You may be sure I gave him the invitation he so well deserved.

deserved. His eyes sparkled with pleasure at the unreserved freedom of my manner, and he looked as if ready to kiss my hand in grateful return. I had not then considered every thing. We must not let our gratitude run away with us; nor suffer the brilliant ornaments about a picture to warp our judgments when the intrinsic value of the piece alone is to be considered. And why did we tear Mira from her beloved Grandby! After education, the next important duty of a parent is the child's establishment in life: on this not only her happiness on earth, but perhaps eternal happiness depends. Awful reflection!

Sir George's estate is greater than we could desire: we dispensed with superior fortune when we believed Mr. Grandby otherwise deserving, and Amelia's, still larger than her sister's, needs no addition: but Sir Charles says he has often heard Sir George Lovemore was a young man of very free principles indeed. Though I do not regret the invitation so due to him, and which even common politeness could not dispense with, I must the manner; for I saw from it hope springing in his eyes: and 'tis barbarous, as well as unjust in parents, to encourage a passion they do not mean to approve. He could not speak to Amelia when he left her: she turned red and white twenty times, and her eyes filled with tears as he departed.

“ What ails my Amelia ?”

“ Oh,

" Oh, Madam, should Lord Winterton attempt"—

No danger, my love: he will be glad to be quiet, if we allow him to be so. I should indeed be sorry should he add by a challenge"—

" A challenge, Madam! he has not courage for that. Had you seen how frightened he was by Sir George's threats when he wanted to prevent my explanation—for indeed, my Lady, Sir George was as much deceived as I was. I only fear more dark work, more treacherous stabs. Heaven guard him, and grant he may have no more trouble on my account; for he is as good as he is brave."

" We may judge of people's courage, but seldom of their goodness, in so short a time, Amelia."

" I only mean as far as we know, Madam; and Miss Butler has told me fifty instances of her cousin's generosity and goodness."

" They may not cover half the number of contrary instances though. They say he is a libertine; you know, Amelia, that was the character you so detested in his friend Lord Winterton."

" His friend! No indeed! Dear my Lady, how can you name them together!"

" Yet he is a libertine, Amelia."

" Is he, Madam?"

Sweet creature, how she looked!—at me—on the ground—then out of one window, then

then the other. Would to Heaven I could have made him what I wished him!

Our entrance into the park soon chased from Amelia every reflection but the dread of meeting her offended father. I encouraged her. I had written from Lord Butler's, and excused Amelia by hinting the basest treachery had been used, but reserved particulars till we met, for I knew they would greatly affect him. Mira met us at the coach door, and hung about her sister in agony at her altered looks. She trembled so we could scarce support her to her father, in whose countenance, on our entrance, coldness and scorn were blended with sorrow, but, at the first sight of her, all the former vanished, and bursting into tears, he caught his other darling to his bosom.

"Forgive me, my father," cried the sobbing, kneeling girl"—

"Forgive," echoed Mira, as she kneeled by her sister, and, like her, raised her supplicating eyes surcharged with tears.

"I do—I do, my child—my children—rise both, and do not kill me thus. You have suffered, Amelia. Too well those looks declare you have already been too severely punished. Curses on the wretches who have caused your sorrows!"

"Oh do not curse them, Sir, or how will you forgive the errors that put me in their power! But can you indeed forgive me? Do you not remember the promise I broke—my word

word to my father! I have indeed been severely punished, Sir; but not altogether stung me like the remorse I felt for my ingratitude to you."

" Mention it no more—forget it, my beloved—'tis enough you know your error, and own the sad effects of disobedience to a parent whose command proceeded from his love. Blest be the Heaven that restores me—thus restores me the treasure of my heart!"

He was quite overcome with her behaviour, so different, so tender and respectful, so like Mira's warm affection! Oh their natures were the same; only my Amelia's education disguised her's for a while, and now the false covering removed (fortunately before it adhered too closely to permit it) she shows her native excellence.

Notwithstanding all my preparation, I was really terrified by the passion Sir Charles was thrown into on the discovery of the abominable plot. " His child, his daughter bartered!" He was for seeking Lord Winterton himself wherever he was hiding; and thank Heaven the wretch was not within his reach; though yet he vows vengeance against the miscreants.

'Twas long before the feeling, agitated father could get through the midnight letter of his imploring, repentant, suffering child. He read—stopped—embraced—wept over her. " Oh why could he not hear, and fly to her relief, as she called on her father's aid? What had then stopped his passage to the villain's heart,

heart, while he snatched his daughter from misery and dishonour?"

He had not patience to go through Lady Priscilla's letter, but in a rage tore it to pieces. From the fragments Mira will take a copy she will send with the particulars of the whole story. I have not even hinted to her my suspicions of Grandby: her heart, with all her noble efforts to release it, must yet struggle in its chains. Why should I render them more galling?

Sir Charles has written letters of thanks to Sir George Lovemore, Lord Butler, and to the gentlemen who conducted Amelia. All the servants who attended have been rewarded. The Surgeon too—Sir Charles says that wound was never received in the way Sir George describes: he easily comprehends the manner. The dear creature! Had you seen, my friend, the father, mother, sister, weeping over it together, and praising him who turned away the danger—My heart twists when I think of it.—Adieu!

L E T T E R LXV.

Sir George Lovemore to Ed. Grandby, Esq.

I HAVE lost her, Grandby—they have taken my lovely charge from me, and you cannot think how awkward I feel without my little

little nurfling. I walk from place to place, and, ten to one, when I suppose myself a dozen miles off, but I find myself just where I set out. Then, perhaps, when I believe it almost night, time has stood still: at others it flies as rapidly as my ideas when they mount up to the enchanted regions of fairy land in the clouds.

Lady Eglington is a charming old lady: if I had not already seen the daughter, I had certainly fallen in love with the mother. You can't imagine how she thanked me for what she called my generous service. Sir Charles too has written such a letter—I cannot bear so many thanks, Grandby: it looks as if they did not expect common virtues from me. Did they suppose me a poltroon! Why did Lady Eglington, when told of my intimacy with you, start? Why at your name did a tear mix with the benignity that before moistened her eye while we talked of her Amelia? Was it fear, lest her Mira's Grandby might be prejudiced by any of my opinions?

I feel sore, Grandby—every thing hurts me: and, like giddy girls, who mean no harm all the while, I fear I've sent my reputation gad-ding, and, now I want, may whistle for it. I never knew there was such virtue in a name before, or, like many of my friends (who each deserve a dozen halters for my one), I might have kept my own in fit condition for the prudish mouth of any old maid in the kingdom: though

though, in my opinion, hypocrisy is a crime of darker die than any I was ever guilty of in my life—almost.

A fellow once defended hypocrisy to me on the principle of the dangers of bad example, and the indecency of affronting society by daring to expose our real characters before it: now, I think it much fairer, than covering them with ragged virtues, that just serve to gain a credit but to cheat mankind the more (or woman kind—'tis all the same, Grandby). No, no: let me wear my own harlequin black and white, and trust me who will.

Lady Eglington, though, gave me a sweet invitation—'twas well she did so, or George had certainly put on a little of his modest assurance, and have gone without it. I am only jealous of this *service*, as 'tis termed, and doubt I owe more to Amelia's champion than to Sir George Lovemore. Be that as it may, I go to-morrow; for, Grandby, this tortoise-paced work will never do for me. I shall see your Mira too: her mother informed me she immediately flew to her on her naughty sister's paw-paw trick.

But what keeps you in town when Mira's in the country? Are you at length bit by the tarantula pleasure, and now capering away with the merry, merry group? Why, what can I suppose? You were sick of London, and wild for the country when you wrote last (a thousand days ago, Grandby); nay, so sick of crouds

crouds, you wanted to fly from them to deserts—and now Mira quits, Grandby delights in them. All this is “ passing strange;” but ‘twill soon be explained; for I’ve sent my servant back to Bath to discharge my rooms. (What’s Bath to me now?) He will find your letters there; for expecting to be absent so short a time, I desired they might not be forwarded. Nor, indeed, could they, had I staid a month; for my notable expedition was to have been a secret one, Grandby.

Let me see—I was going to help Lord Winterton to a wife, wasn’t I? And now—the Lord help us, Grandby!—A man’s never secure a moment. Marriages are made in Heaven, you know; and so Winterton lost a wife (devil take his impudence) he thought himself sure of, and I, without thinking a word of the matter, have—have I found her, Grandby! What would I give for a peep at the stars now—Well, marriage and hanging, they say—no alternative for me, however; for by Jove, if I can’t get into one noose, I’ll substitute the other in a thrice; for, Grandby, I am not used to disappointments, and cannot stomach them at all.

I am still at Lord Butler’s—for a miracle—They could never make me stay so long a time together before. My lively coufin (with the arch eyes) asked me just now, if I was hiding from Lord Winterton? “ Well,” said the saucy girl, “ we are at any rate obliged
to

to him for this unusual visit." Lord Butler's is, in fact, the nearest house I am acquainted in to Eglinton-Hall. Apropos, Grandby, you have often been angry with me for not coming down to you; make haste home, and I'll instantly pay you the long promised, long expected visit; nay, to quit scores, it shall be a visitation, Grandby—indeed it shall; depend upon me now: so return immediately.

I had a charming half hour tête-à-tête with my Amelia the evening before they took her from me. The two dowagers were busily settling the œconomy of their future acquaintance plan, and Miss Butler obliged us by her absence. Opportunity befriend the considerate girl whenever she has occasion for it herself!

'Tis very odd when one has most to say, and wishes most for utterance, one should have least power to speak. They say, love makes people eloquent: when once they begin I suppose, but there lies the difficulty. Heaven knows, I was never very bashful, and once could "pour soft nonsense in the fair one's ear" by vollies.

How could you tell me, Grandby, Amelia was a coquette? Had she a single spark of the character, what a glorious opportunity to display her powers when she saw me look and behave so like a fool. Far from it, she is as generous as beautiful; for I did at last say something, though I hardly know what. We were just going in to supper, and not another moment would be left me.

" You

" You are going, Miss Eglington,—I may lose you for ever—may never see you more—for how shall I presume, without your permission—I never will avail myself of what chance only has presented—but would you give me leave to throw myself at your feet—at your father's"—

Casting a look of the softest expression on her mother at the other end of the room—" Oh Sir George, you know not what a sad, sad girl I have been! I have a great deal to atone for. *There* I have been generously forgiven; but a father's displeasure yet hangs heavy at my heart! I have no doubt of obtaining his pardon also, but my future conduct can alone do away my past offences, prove me worthy of their indulgence, and reconcile me to myself."

" I do not even wish, Madam, to be favoured by you, unless"—

" No conditions, Sir George—'twould be at once infringing—I must not now"—

" Then I bid you adieu, perhaps, for ever!"

" How can you talk so? Will not my father be happy to thank you?"

" And so to politeness, to extorted politeness, owe what I would owe to you, and to you only? I will not go to receive Sir Charles's thanks."

" What a proud spirit! come and receive mine then?"

" No"

" Pish!—

" Pish!—Well," (with a fine curtsy, and mixed air of playfulness and solemnity) " I shall be wondrous glad to see you ! Will that do?"

" Yes"—And I caught her hand, and had certainly kissed it away, but that she ran from me to her mother, whom she continually hangs about like an infant, while the good lady appears quite transported at every proof of her returning love. Oh that she loved me as well—as her mother, Grandby ! Will that do? No, that will never do: but would to Heaven she loved me, as Mira loves you !

What a happy fellow you are, Grandby ! all your ordeals are over, and you have past muster with scarce a question. See what it was to be a good boy: love your book, and say your catechise. The worst of me is, that my name is George Lovemore: I've a mind to get it changed by act of parliament. It always did half the busines for me. Do you remember, Edmund, when at school you eat the apples, and I was going to be flogged for it, but that you discovered yourself to save me? Then 'twas,—“ Who could believe Master Grandby would do so ! ” Yet Master Grandby got off clear though proved guilty, while poor George had like to have suffered only on suspicion. Very fair all this, my friend; yet so it is, and such is the world to this day!

Yet I have hopes of this sweet girl for all her reformation scheme. Had you beheld her,

her, Grandby, the first time we met after that busy, busy, busy day—I wonder if she recollects on whose bosom she leaned in the chariot? Oh shall I ever, ever forget it! Now, Mr. Moralist, ask me, would I wish her to love me should her father object—Pish! he will, he shall approve me, Grandby—Am not I reformed too? Do I object to Amelia, because she was once a little wild? Can Sir Charles, in conscience, be less complaisant? And give me leave to tell you, Grandby, a woman's conduct—but dare not, Grandby, to censure hers! By my soul I won't bear it—she never deserved censure; I swear she did not. But what a charming pair we'll make when comparing notes, and chatting over past follies?

“Indeed, my dear, I was a terrible fellow. Had you known all, you had never ventured—Lord! had you but heard how once, when the pretty little milk maid”—

“Oh my love! don't mention your giddy flights; for was I not once a “sad, sad girl!” But 'twas you confirmed my reformation; for had I not loved my George, my deliverer, the sweet fellow of fellows, I might have forgotten all: so, whatever I intended, 'twas you only reformed me.”

“No; 'twas my Amelia reformed me with the very first glance of her eye, taught me to distinguish, and to know—love in its proper “shape how lovely!”

Won't

Won't it be pretty, Grandby? What amusement this for a winter's evening?

And then—"Do you remember, Amelia, when you covered my bosom from the pangs of death? Oh let me look on that scar—dearer to my soul than the lustre of those eyes, the sweetnes of those lips! Let my tears still bathe it, while I kiss it a thousand, thoufand times. And was this soft, this lovely neck wounded in my defence! Amelia—when this snowy arm no longer can ward the inevitable dart that must at length reach my breast, and you resign me, for a while resign me; then, when we meet to part no more, I will ask of HIM who will array thy gentle spirit with beauty superior even to this, (that while I now gaze, delights my aching sences,) I will ask of HIM to leave me this blemish, lovelier than all thy celestial charms—to leave me this scar, this dear sign, the tender memorial of my Amelia's love!"

Oh Grandby! what delightful nonsense! To throw all one's thoughts alive upon paper —'tis such a sweet beguiling of the hours of absence! I used to think you a most insufferable coxcomb, and was often tempted to throw your whining stuff as I yawned over it, half unread, into the fire. Had it been another's, I had certainly done so, perhaps (for they were all alike) without opening the letter at all. Adieu, dear fellow—my friend! my brother! (Oh Grandby!)

L E T.

LETTER LXVI.

Mrs. Boothby to Lady Eglington.

WHAT a turn, my Lady! What a fortunate turn, and wonderful deliverance indeed from the most diabolical scheme ever planned! Do you not believe, independent of what affection prompts, I have particular cause to rejoice? Oh! you cannot conceive how miserable I have been in having contributed, by my advice to indulge Amelia's wishes for coming to town, to the mischiefs that fatal step brought on. Mr. Boothby too—his prognostications were terribly over-set for a while, but now he indeed triumphs in his foresight. She was always a wondrous favourite, and he ever used to say her good sense (though yet but an April sun) would at length break through the mists of prejudice, and warm to life the native seeds of virtue in her heart.

We wept together over her letter. Mr. Boothby's resentment almost equalled her father's—He loved her as a parent, and was she not torn from his guardian care? He was in raptures with his generous girl! Yet who, my friend, could have expected from Amelia such noble fortitude! We have not done her justice. Had she never swerved, we had not known half her worth.

And does she cast a partial eye on her deliverer? What wonder? Gratitude, like a double mirror, must on the one side magnify every advantage, and on the other diminish all his faults. Which predominate in Sir George Lovemore's character, 'twould be difficult to determine. I have been very industrious in my enquiries, (the truth is I am interested in his favour,) and know not whether what I learn (upon the whole) makes most for, or against him. He was very early (often a great misfortune) his own master, and with a fine fortune, lively talents, and a generous, open disposition, launched out into all the follies of the age. His estate (though not yet impaired) has freely flown about; now in acts of the noblest benevolence, now in scenes of the most dissipated riot and confusion. He is young, and may already see his errors. A generous passion may best reflect them, and point his heart to virtue. If he wishes to reform, the foundation for reformation is a good one. But to you, most excellent of parents, I pretend not to direct my feeble observations. May he, who suffered you not to bleed in the most sensible nerve of your heart, assist your endeavours to make your children happy, as both are now deserving.

But what have I now to tell you of the wretched Priscilla! Whatever you resolve with regard to Lord Winterton, you will have no further trouble about her; or, were she within

within the reach of your resentment, her husband—Ah, Madam! her miserable husband! Infamous woman! to abuse the power she had over such a man, and to make such returns to his unbounded love!

As soon as we were a little composed, after reading the affecting accounts, I sent for Mr. Blomer. You may suppose I could not bear the viper in my sight. Heavens! when I recollect her innocent looks on that night she stole Amelia!—When Mr. Blomer first heard, he discredited the story; but when too evident, his delusion vanished—he fainted—wept—imprecated—threatened--and then softened almost to forgiveness. I began her letter—

“ Spare me, Madam, spare my bursting heart! I knew before, and too far indulged her dissipation, to my ruin have I indulged it. But this I never apprehended. Vices! Oh where will they stop! What shall I do? How save her from destruction? From public reproach? Her pride will never bear it—my child too—my poor infant—I must resolve to restrain her: but how? I never had any influence, and the mask of decency once dropped—advise me, Madam—Mr. Boothby, save me from dishonour, from myself.”—

We promised to use every interest with you, and made no doubt but for his sake you would be lenient; but besought him not to let affection blind him further, to her, as well as his own and child's undoing. As a check to his

indulgence, I insisted on his hearing her own sentiments in that part of the letter, my Lady, where the ungrateful woman upbraids him with his weak indulgence. Poor man, how he looked!—We advised him to make her future conduct the condition of his, and your forgiveness.

Good God, my friend! The very next morning Lady Priscilla's woman came to implore us to hasten to the distracted husband, or she feared he would, in his present phrenzy, lay violent hands on himself: he had several times attempted it—Lady Priscilla was gone off—fled to France—and with a young French officer of rank, with whom she had formed an acquaintance at the opera, only a few nights before.

Gracious Heaven! what libertinism rages through the land! To paint Mr. Blomer's despair would be impossible—Oh how he loved her!

We found him extended on the floor in a state of torpid insensibility—but for a short interval—he was soon roused by a sense of his wrongs to furious madness. For a long while he resisted every effort to compose his troubled soul. I brought him his little daughter: he had ever doated on the child; but now he turned from the smiling infant with seeming horror, though she, as usual, expanded her arms to go to her father. Many an hour of joyless solitude has this his little darling relieved,

lieved, while the flaunting mother was whirling in her dissipated rounds.

" Away with her," cried the frantic man, " let me never see her more—I hate—and sicken at the sight of her"—and he cast such a look of ghastly rage on the smiling innocent, that trembling left, in his distraction, he meditated her the victim to her guilty mother, I was flying away with her—

" What! must I lose her too! Am I to be deserted, abandoned by all! Not even my child left me to soothe my aching breast!"

Pleased with the first rational words he had spoken, and wishing to raise the softer emotions (that soonest tranquillize the violent), I replied—

" 'Tis you abandon her; you, her only parent.—Sweet innocent! if your father hates, and throws you from his bosom, where will you, in such a world of treachery, of wickedness, and of sorrows; where will you find protection and pity? Child of affliction! if thus misfortune already clouds your infant dawn, what may the tempest be that threatens destruction to your future years, as you wander through them alone—friendless—un-guarded.

The child, as I spoke, looked up in my face. Whether 'twas frightened by my raised voice, or amused by the moving of my lips, its attention was affecting. The little soul did not cry out, but a tremulous motion con-

vulsed her mouth, and her eyes swam in tears.
The father observed—

“ I did not—I never will abandon her—give her to me—give me all I have now in the world. Abandon thee! Oh my child! my all !

He pressed her to his poor bosom, that heaved violently from the throbs within. I had hopes the tears he now shed abundantly over his little one, would ease his heart, as well as perhaps save his reason : but, unfortunately, as he continued to caress the babe, he mentioned her name, and was stung again to madness by the sound.

“ Why dost thou smile on me, my love? Thy father never more will joy even in thy artless smiles : Oh, he was undone by sweet-ness that seemed guileless as thine! Why dost thou press my finger thus? Is it to promise thou wilt not deceive me? Oh, love me, my child ; thou his only comfort in affliction that bears thy father to his grave. Wilt thou love me, Priscilla?—Priscilla !”

Repeating over the name in the softest accent of fondness, as his thoughts dissolving into affection hung on it for a while—then starting, and thundering “ Priscilla,” he flew again into the wildest passions, till, quite exhausted, he sunk into the gloomy state in which we first found him.

An unfolded letter lay by him at a little distance, as if he had tossed it from him.

Hollow
Often,

Often, as if we attempted to sooth him, pointing to the paper, he would cry, "Look there?" As if the cruel contents precluded all possibility of success. Mr. Boothby took it up, but would not venture reading it before him.

The maid informed us, "her Lady had, for some days, been denied to all but one gentleman, a foreigner, and had been violently agitated by some letters she had received, starting at every knock at the door. That two days before she had packed up her jewels, laces, and other valuables of easy carriage, telling her she intended going to Bath the beginning of the week. She had also burned a number of letters, and other papers; some of the covers remained in her open bureau." The woman, supposing it proper I should be informed of every thing that might lead to further discovery, brought me those covers. Though they now can lead to nothing material, I own I started at the hand; but fancy, after such a succession of extraordinary events, I shall be soon surprised at nothing. She continued—"That Mr. Blomer had been very angry with his Lady the day before: 'twas the first time in his life, she believes: he was the sweetest tempered man in the world, and was always unhappy when she was the least disturbed. In a few moments he called her up in a violent hurry to her Lady, who had thrown her-

self into fits by her terrible passions, and when she recovered, not regarding her being in the room, she went on, calling Mr. Blomer a fool for crediting ridiculous stories, and a coward for not resenting them; declaring she would never look on him again unless he instantly fought Mr. Boothby for his daring defamation. But Mr. Blomer whispering something she did not hear, her Ladyship fell into another fit, and afterwards cried out she was betrayed, undone, ruined by a set of pusillanimous wretches, who had stabbed her reputation for ever, by suffering themselves to be conquered by a weak, silly girl she had always managed like an infant. And then, (her rage transporting her beyond all recollection,) —

“ Blockhead, coward, sot,” said she, “ to suffer himself to be overcome by a vapouring, enamoured boy! But though he had not courage, had he no head? Where was his recollection? Were there no swords? No daggers? No poisons?”

“ Oh Heavens!” cried Mr. Blomer, turning still paler with horror, “ what are you talking of, Priscilla! Are you mad?”

“ Wretch!” said she, “ what are a thousand such lives to my fame! my reputation! Know you not both must now be blasted? and that I am undone—undone for ever!”

“ Mr. Blomer endeavoured to compose her —talked of Sir Charles Eglington’s lenity, his Lady’s humanity—

“ And

" And would I condescend to be obliged to them! Contemptible meanness! And why did you not add Miss Eglington's too? Rather let me perish! But I am revenged: yes: in spite of her pride—her great, her towering spirit, I'm revenged. Cease, Mr. Blomer."

—He attempted to pacify her.—“ Be humbled yourself, if you please; but know, I am above it. Yet though I were not, tho' I could stoop to the Eglington's; (Oh how I despise, how I hate the name!) say, how shall we account for the sums due to Winterton, to Howell, on account of this miserably executed scheme?”

In short, my Lady, 'twould be fatiguing you to little purpose to go through the whole scene. Mr. Blomer could neither bring her to temper, nor get from her the particulars of her wicked engagements. In the evening she received letters from her agents, who, fearing detection, were till now afraid of stirring; but hearing nothing to alarm them further, they now ventured to demand, one, the return of three thousand pounds delivered Lady Priscilla on condition of her making Amelia his wife, the other, five hundred, the wages of her impious labour. Mr. Boothby is of opinion, should they dare demand those sums of Mr. Blomer, the affair would admit a lawsuit: but would not that be publishing all, and better prosecute the wretches at once as they deserve. Mr. Boothby ad-

vises a compromise; but you must determine. Poor Bloomer, though his shattered affairs can ill bear those additional demands, (he has lately paid the most exorbitant debts, and more are pouring in from all quarters,) is yet willing to do all that justice requires.

Lady Priscilla, on the receipt of those letters, put her resolve in immediate execution; for she went out, (no doubt to settle matters with the Count,) and, soon returning, pretended to dress for the opera, loading herself with jewels, and finding some means or other to convey away the caskets she had before packed. She was actually set down at the Hay-market, told her servants she would sup abroad, and afterwards be set down by a friend—discharged them—and was heard of no more, till Mr. Blomer (with a mind filled with care, shame, and sorrow, after awaiting her return all night with added anxiety to that he had often experienced before,) received the letter I mentioned, with the account and reasons of her infamous elopement.

Oh what a letter, my dearest Lady Eglington! What a hardened, shameless, prostituted woman! After cruelly upbraiding his weakness (to which she imputes all her conduct) in terms (now she has no measures to keep) far more acrimonious than those she uses in her letter to Amelia; “she informs him of the above engagements, and of numberless other debts, with her total inability to satisfy

satisfy them, having lost all she could command, at cards. That, not chusing to article with her most despicable enemies, and not expecting from the mean spirit of a wretch who had dared affront her with such insolent proposals, that protection a man of honour would exert on such a provocation, she thought proper to seek it where she might better hope to find it. And if her preference of another (thank Heaven, so far from loving, she never had endured him: had she not often told him so?) if her preference of another affected him, she advised him to seek consolation in that school of philosophy, Eglington Hall, where he might learn, if not to bear, at least to brave misfortune well."

Had you ever an idea, my Lady, of assurance like this? I could almost cry with vexation that the creature is out of my reach. How can Blomer regret—think of her! Not a word of her child!—her mother! But how should she think of, who never cared for either? The poor old Lady is almost distract-ed too, and now reproaches her false indulgence, and the principles she suffered her daughter to imbibe from an erroneous education, without ever troubling herself about consequences. I leave you to reflection, certain you will compassionate the unhappy Blomer, as much as you will execrate the diabolical Priscilla.

LETTER LXVII.

Mrs. Boothby to Lady Eglington.

I MUST now inform your Ladyship of a visit which I have just received from my Lord Sedley, purposely to ask my opinion of the aspect of things at the Hall. He enquired how Miss Eglington's heart bore the shock it had received, and whether I believed things might yet turn in his favour. He dared not yet hope she had recovered her serenity; but, as I had assured him all prospect of her union with Mr. Grandby was absolutely at an end, did I imagine in time she might conquer her present attachment, and that he might flatter himself with the hope of succeeding to the place Mr. Grandby now held in her heart? I candidly told him I had not the least doubt of it; acquainted him with Miss Eglington's resolution and fortitude throughout the whole of so severe a trial to a heart no less heroic than sensible. I added the very high opinion I knew she entertained of his Lordship: that none was so likely to succeed as himself; but advised him, as I had your Ladyship before, not to hurry, but leave that heart to its own efforts.

“ For the world he would not hurt her by even mentioning his passion; but could he obtain leave of Sir Charles to pay a second visit at the Hall, not to tease, but by his attention

attention to amuse, with her other friends, the melancholly that must at times cloud her hours, did I think Miss Eglington would be offended? or construe his visits (his looking at her only) as harbouring already too presumptuous a hope?"

I encouraged him, my Lady. I knew his delicacy would keep him from disgusting by importunity, or I had feared for him; for what so offensive to the heart as affection from a foreign object, while dwelling on its favourite one? But I know Lord Sedley, without her perceiving it, or perhaps intending it himself, will by degrees work his own way: and this may sooner expel the unfortunate passion the sweet Mira was deceived into, than all the heroism and virtue in the world.

Generous, amiable Sedley! with what tender solitude he enquired of Mr. Grandby, and how feelingly he entered into his disappointment and misfortunes! Was I wrong to inform him of particulars? I was ever too communicative, but you may depend on his discretion. He seemed very curious, though restrained by politeness from asking questions: and did not the interest he had in the affair give him a tacit right to satisfaction? My Lord has a prodigious opinion of Grandby, (higher than he deserves, independent of this adventure,) and, now he does not fear, not only compassionates him as an unfortunate rival, but regards him with enthusiasm as well

well as affection. After all, my Lady, those men (the very best of them) indulge themselves in thinking too lightly of what my Lord Sedley himself calls but “entanglements, and the latitudes of unreflecting youth.” Hear his own words :

“ Mr. Grandby most certainly erred in attempting Miss Eglington’s affections, (and does not the temptation itself almost excuse him? (when his *entanglement* was of so serious a nature that its concealment was absolutely necessary to his success. But you cannot conceive, my dear Madam, how often young men, at that very early time of life, with the best dispositions to virtue, may be led, by a thousand unmeaning ways, as well as absolute ensnaring deceptions, unwarily into engagements, which, if they have either honour or humanity, will damp, if not totally destroy, the enjoyments of their future lives : though it cannot be expected they should devote to the *casual latitudes of their first unreflecting hours* the whole period of their future thinking years.”

Something like this I once observed myself, but not with the *latitude* my Lord admits ; (those young men are ever ready to assist each other over those kind of stumbling-blocks :) for I’m of opinion, be their youth what it will, (unless, as too often the case, they have been ensnared,) that, if old enough to engage unguarded hearts, they know what they are about,

about, and let them pay for their folly; and, since public chastisement cannot reach them, may the contempt they meet with from the delicate and more considerate part of the sex, with the rejection of such families as their *entanglements* exclude them from, ever be their punishment! How soon would the morals of young men be improved, if fathers and daughters more generally resembled Sir Charles Eglington and his Mira! And how charmingly would more examples of smarting Grandby's and Lovemore's warn the confident youths from presuming longer on the neglect of fathers, the indelicacy of daughters; and check their wild career of vice, to the general benefit of society, as well as their own happiness, and the peace of the families they are allied to!

"There seems, indeed," continued his Lordship, "to be something very particular in the embarrassment by which Mr. Grandby (unfortunate young man) has dashed his otherwise so propitious fortune, so towering felicity! He was beloved—first loved—and I fear"—(with a deep sigh, and he was for a moment, silent)—"but, Madam, however unfortunate he has been, I cannot think him capable of premeditated baseness. Recollect his behaviour when first we met. Such resignation when he believed mine the successful love, while his heart bled at every pore—And then, when undeceived, how feeling! how delicate! feelings!"

feelings! Not triumphantly—insolently displayed; but withdrawn; their intended concealment but more touchingly reached my heart. He has a great, a generous mind! I never saw so amiable a youth. Yes, Mrs. Boothby, though I could not love the rival, I adored the man! And now—what does he now suffer? More severely suffer, since then his passion had not rested on the bosom of returning love! Dear Grandby! that I could”—

Indeed, Madam, the tears fairly dropped on his hands as he raised them clasped to his sympathizing breast! I felt, for a moment, somewhat moved myself; for I once almost idolized him too—but I soon recollect—Indeed I've infinitely a worse opinion of Grandby than of his friend; for Lovemore has, at least, a more sincere and open nature, and possesses not the art of concealing his vices like the deep-designing Grandby. Will you believe, my Lady, that the covers of the letters Lady Priscilla left in her bureau (a poor attempt to mortify Miss Eglington, I suppose, whom she always disliked,) were the hand-writing of Grandby? I now recollect a thousand things my not having an idea of the possibility of Grandby's perfidy occasioned my passing by unnoticed at the time—They often made opportunities of conversing apart—Then her confusion, on Amelia's charge of partiality—Amelia too must have had some foundation for discrediting the intelligence
you

you received;—her hints evidently pointed to Lady Priscilla. As to Grandby's knowledge of her flight, I have not a doubt of it: the whole of his behaviour to Mr. Blomer evinces it. The dear Mira! how was she here deceived too, when she defended him from Mr. Boothby's suspicions!

But even this is nothing, my friend, to what follows—Grandby's interests, combining with his native artful genius, well disguised his vices; but finding himself detected, and having now no hope of ever being reinstated in the favour he lately held, he has no longer motives of concealment; but ranges at full liberty through the lowest scenes of this dissipated town. Yes, I am informed he has been at times seen with the most notorious women in the most notorious houses: at others, associating with a professed gambler of infamous character. He seldom returns home till morning, and is soon abroad again—But why trouble either you or myself about Grandby? The apostate Grandby! Apostacy? No—He never fell from virtue; but too successfully assumed its form, the more securely to abuse and trample on its dictates!

I know not whether you are right in keeping from Mira what, instead of corroding, as you imagine, the hurt in her heart, might instantly heal it. Used to consider Mr. Grandby in the most amiable lights alone, (even since the discovery of the error, she may now soften

soften by shading it with the affection it proceeded from,) the picture continually presenting itself to her imagination, is not one which though she wishes it destroyed, she will easily forget: but let truth display it in its proper colours, and she will no longer dwell on deformity: she may, indeed, be shocked—be affected for a while, but Mira was born to love virtue only.

Adieu, my dear friend—I am going to Lady Elmour, who leaves us soon. My Lord insists on carrying her to the South of France, in hopes of re-establishing the health he so wantonly destroyed. Heaven grant success to his endeavours! For his sake I principally wish it—Her crown of immortality is prepared, and she is ready to receive it.

LETTER LXVIII.

Sir George Lovemore to Edmund Grandby, Esq.

WHAT a life of suspence and perplexity is mine to be now? I that never was used to, or could abide either for a moment—Grandby, will you buy me a pair of the very best new-fashioned pistols? But hang it I won't shoot myself neither, while Sir Charles Eglington smiles on me with one eye, as he lours with 'tother—while his Lady looks as half wishing to chace away the frown;—and

Amelia,

Amelia, as if she not only loved, but would tell me so too, if she dared. But this won't satisfy me Grandby. Why cannot the looks of both parents be such as I might easily interpret into—"Here, honest George—here's there girl—take her when you will." Now, this would be something to the purpose; but while the smile and the wish may, perhaps, be bought by the nonsensical *service*, and the frown and diffidence be owing to——You know what, Grandby; is it at all wonderful I should have an eye to the pistols as a fit punishment for the latter's precluding my full enjoyment of the former?

Joking apart, (and you know I am not apt to be intimidated by trifles,) I have had scalding water thrown on all my hopes by their half-forbidding faces. And then—what the devil's the matter between you and Mira? For that something wrong has happened, is plain; though I can't find out what. An't you a pretty fellow to conceal it from me? Here's the servant back from Bath, and not a scrap of paper to save me from the worse than Stygian torments of suspence. And so to this love-quarrel (whatever it is) all the enigmas of your curious letter tended? For Heaven's sake, (I own I'm no conjurer, and don't pretend to be one, Grandby,) for pity's sake, dear fellow, take compassion on me, and quickly unriddle the mystery.—But I will not have patience and await your writing.

ing. When, in your present sulky humour, may you condescend to satisfy me? No; I'll instantly follow this letter, and in spite of your heroics, bring you home—bring you to Mira. What! I suppose she has shewn herself a bit of a woman at last—has taken a few airs, or so—And because she was wrong, your proud stomach will not submit to own she was right, and ask pardon for your crime? Pish, Grandby, ever humour a woman's treating you ill. You can't imagine, when they relent, or tire, how delightfully they come to: then all the game's in your own hand—but don't be in a hurry. Stay till the conscious down-cast eye ventures timidly to rise to yours; as much as to say, Forgive me, Sir."—Stay till the inviting smile between fear and fondness trembles on her lips; as much as to say, "I long to be friends." Then, Grandby, (I repeat) the game's in your own hand, and use your power as you please.

These are the little blemishes that endear those creatures to us beyond all their beauties, all their virtues! and which, like well-judged shades, soften the lovely pieces. The gipseys know it well, or they would take more pains than they do to be perfect. Nay, do they not frequently assume the appearance of weakness, and play off a thousand little caprices, because convinced they become them? And they are, Grandby—they really are pretty. Besides, were these real faults, superior

superior man (as Breeze says; the Lord of Woman, says Lovemore) superior man should ever be indulgent to the foibles of the weaker sex, and recollect his firmer mind should rather yield indulgent when a fault may better plead excuse—else where the advantages of his more improved education, and boasted philosophy? Let, then, all abject victory belong to those low-soul'd conquerors, while I rise by subjection, and triumph most by yielding. So, Grandby, take wit in your anger, and hasten to Eglinton-Hall—and, for your government, let me tell you a piece of news, my boy, that may perhaps bring you down in a hurry—Do you know Lord Sedley's with your Mira? Do not start now, and turn frantic at his name—she scarce observed him: but though he's the second charming fellow in the world, by Heavens I do not like his looks at all! Yet he was not very particular to Miss Eglinton neither—hardly more so than to her sifter; (let him beware on that side; touch me not there, Sedley!) but there was a certain sparkling in his eyes that did not much favour of despair. The devil! He does not surely presume on your absence—Or, whatever's the cause of it!

I never found myself so curious in my life, and every one determined to drive me mad. I questioned every woman in the room, but, if 'twas a privilege peculiar to the sex, or women actually had a patent for curiosity,
they

they could not be more tenacious of information, and, instead of a sisterly feeling for the pangs of a situation they had so often themselves experienced, they but seemed delighted in putting mine the more to the rack.

I've a good mind (you unconscionable fellow you—to serve me so!) to tell you nothing more: you little deserve I should eternally write my fingers to the bone, to humour your proud affectation of carelessness, while dying to know how the very poker stands in the grate at Eglington-Hall.

Well then—As soon as my name was announced, Sir Charles, his Lady, and your Mira, sprung forward to receive me. Such thanks—such repetitions about nothing! So half rapture at the warmth of their reception, half confusion, I was obliged to repeat too; and again reminding them of what I wished them to forget, I made another excuse for my curious introduction to their daughter.

The room was full of company: Amelia was the first object I beheld, and my eyes were fixed on her while addressing her parents. She too started up on my entrance, but stopped—stepped forward, and retired again, changing colour at every irresolute motion. I approached her—Heavens! how my tremblings were heightened by the pleasure in her eyes, and the sweet confusion she betrayed! Only think, Grandby—I did not dare enquire of her shoulder, nor ask her to let

let me kiss it! Wretched things ceremonials! —When two people love each other, (and I swear she loves me, Grandby,) why should the noblest feelings of the heart be checked by sordid formalities?

Sir William Barville (an old acquaintance) introduced me to his new-married Lady, Mira's bosom friend. I suppose, Grandby, she was acquainted with your fair-one's *inclinations* (as the girls term it) long before you knew any thing of the matter, or perhaps she herself. Oh they are wonderful at discoveries of each others, though (pretty dears) quite novices at the busines of their own hearts.

Lady Helena Barville, among the many lovely, was the loveliest woman in the room after Mira, who came next Amelia. Oh that Mira! Well for you, Grandby, I saw her sister first, or you had been ousted, man, all to nothing. The truth is, so far from knowing which is the most beautiful, I hardly can tell one piece of perfection from the other. I shall watch you, Grandby—take care you make no mistakes, and say pretty things to my wife (I will have one of them) instead of your own.

Amelia has recovered the roses, but they bloomed not so lively in Mira's cheek as I expected; yet the delicate lilly threw an interesting plaintiveness over her soul-beaming face, that almost made me wish Amelia's less lively. It looked as if she was in love, Grandby—So I hope is Amelia; but when I

am

am absent I suppose the roses fade, like her sister's. 'Tis well I am your friend, Grandby, or I might be in love with both.

Lord Sedley appeared—Bless me! his reception almost equalled my own! I was half jealous for myself, (I lately deal in divisions,) and t'other half for you. Mira received him like a—(don't make such a long face, Grandby)—like a friend. Were I in his Lordship's deplorable situation, (yes, yes, he's in for't, God help him, I see that!) for millions I would not have been received with such easy composure, such tranquil pleasure! No, I had rather the queen of my desires had lour'd on me for a twelvemonth.—Grandby, while you live you need not fear Lord Sedley.

The conversation, tho' lively, was insipid stuff to me. I wanted to speak to Amelia—to Mira; and not once could catch a moment's opportunity. At length, after some music, (Oh what a pair of sirens! Talk not of preferences, thou blinded Grandby!) I got near a group of sisters, Lord Sedley, and the new-made happy pair.

Bless me, how Lady Helena watches her Adonis's eyes! 'Twill do very well while yet they eternally fix on her: but I'd advise her not to accustom herself to the expecting its continuance as a thing of course; for, though he loves her twenty years hence, as I shall my bright Amelia, a man can't be always gazing at a face (however enchanting) he sees

sees every day, when there are new ones around him. I'll venture a wager she'll be a votary of the "green-eyed Monster." I should not dislike a little tinge of it myself in a wife—just to prove my consequence; but one would be jealous of her of the powers of which she dared to be diffident: it would be an affront to one's own taste too.

Lady Helena is very lively, and says a thousand clever things without either affectation or ill-nature. I observe, though she idolizes Mira, she fears her a little, and takes council of her eye, whenever she indulges her vivacity. She has been a coquette I'll swear; for she keeps it up with her husband a little yet. This may fan the flame at first; beware, my Lady, you do not puff it out at last.

Perhaps, Grandby, I owe her a little grudge—it might be more, but she's too handsome to allow it to be a great one. You shall hear.—I asked when Mr. Grandby returned to the country? One sister turned paler, and the sparkles for a moment fled from her eye: the other glowed deeper, and answered with a faint—"I don't know indeed." Lady Helena played her fan, and cast such a look on her friend!—while Sir William bit his lip, and poor Sedley almost quaked at the fear-inspiring sound. What the devil was I to think of all this now? I stared at one Lady—at another, but all their

talking eyes were now mute, because I wished them to speak ; and every dear piece of contradiction (fool ! not to seem indifferent ; I had then heard all) sat demure as ancient maidens in modest dudgeon over a harmless jest. Lady Helena saw amazement bursting from my opening lips, and instantly stopped me with—(aloud too)

“ You were lately at Bath, Sir, George ? ”

Who told you that, thought I ; and, oaf that I was, started at the question.

“ I was : has your Ladyship been there this season ? ”

“ O dear, yes ; and have fifty correspondents there now.”—(The Lord help me, if they are all women—again thought poor George.)—“ Pray, how did you leave Mrs. Townley ? ”

(Confusion ! All the arch eyes you ever beheld were innocence to her’s—Grandby, you used to say I never blushed : faith I’m turned an arrant blusher now, and blush for all my sins together, as now they hourly stare me in the face.) My poppy-coloured phiz attracted general observation. Amelia bent over her sweet prompt face, and looked so curious —Sir Charles and Lady Eglington were all attention—Mira, one would think, might feel for a brother-sufferer ; how did she like the being disconcerted just before ? Lord Sedley and Sir William smiled, and his Lady looked as if bent on mischief.

“ Ma’am

" Ma'am—Madam," (at length stammering something) " I have not seen her lately."

" Not since you were at Bath, I suppose. I asked how she was when you came away?"

" Very well, when—when I saw her last, my Lady—I believe."

" you thought her very handsome, Sir?"

" Who I, Madam? If—if I ever did, 'twas before I knew what real beauty was. She is perhaps pretty—very simple, very ignorant, and—and very fantastic, my Lady—Ha, ha, ha."

" Oh you ungrateful creature! When you were so very well pleased with that simplicity, that—that" (affecting to mimic me) " you—you wished to improve it further: and—and she was so very apt a scholar, that a very few more lessons from Sir George Love-more's superior talents had quite metamorphosed the *pretty, simple, ignorant* rustic, into a first-rate Lady of fashion! Ha, ha, ha."

" Lord! Lord! how your Ladyship has been misinformed! But Bath was ever the head-quarters of scandal. They are certainly a strange couple, but—but can you believe —Mr. Townley's my friend, Madam"—

" And therefore you determined he should not die of an apoplexy for want of exercise. Your friend! Ha, ha—Poor man! I think I see him running up and down stairs ten times in a minute, rather than leave his *dear friend*."

" Oh now I recollect—Your Ladyship (I find) has heard of a design a few of us formed to alarm Townley a little—just to rouse him from the ridiculous affectation he aimed at of appearing indifferent to what he so valued. Yes—we really made the poor fellow look about him sometimes. But I believe his wife is most sincerely attached to him, notwithstanding their mutual whims."

And then, Grandby, by way of bringing up my credit, I put on a grave, wise, moral face, and tried to sport a few sentiments for the good of the company. I know not how it happened, they stuck in my throat, and I made a worse figure than before—'Twas the recollection, perhaps, that sentiments are quite out of fashion, since SO BE-SURFACED by Sheridan.

Lady Eglington, finding I wielded the moral cudgels so awkwardly, took them into her own hand, and played them about me till I smarted pretty severely. Yet while I listened like a great bashful school-boy, playing my thumbs, and raising my eyes from the ground to hers, as who would say, " I stand corrected," do you not believe I was very well pleased with the lecture? Yes—yes, Grandby: my Lady designs I should attend her to church by and by with her fan and prayer-book, or why should she take such pains to reform, and give me what she calls a " right turn of thinking?"

thinking?" Let me tell you, Grandby, the old Lady talked like an oracle, and all for my good: the worst of it is, she will not easily be persuaded to believe I should have been entirely of her opinion, had not Amelia apropos stepped in a comment to her text.

After a dozen more attempts to mention your name without a rueful length of face succeeding to the sound, and no chance of speaking to Amelia apart, I, at length, took my leave; receiving a general invitation equally polite, affectionate, and friendly, sufficiently qualified by a little fear, diffidence, and reserve. And now—on the tilts of expectation, in a day or two I fly after my letter, and shall call on you, Mr. Oedipus, for an instant explanation of those heart-perplexing riddles, you have so cruelly, day after day, left me to guess at.

* * * *

Are all the wayward sisters combining against me, that Fortune thus crosses me at every direction? I was just closing my letter, when an express from Exeter brings me a piece of intelligence I have but time to inform you of, ere I hasten to obey the summons it conveys. My uncle is going, Edmund—but at what a time has he chosen to make his exit! Not the four thousand a year just dropping into my pocket, can pay me for the suspense and vexation it brings with it. The old gentleman

teased me with one caprice or other all his life, and ceases not with his latest breath. But go I must, let me grumble as I will—I've a great mind to write first to Sir Charles, and let Fortune decide my fate at once—Yes: and so shut myself out at once too—for ten to one but with his present prejudices he rejects me, whereas, with the footing I now have, I may work my way by degrees, and in time, vanquish.

But should some one else mean time—There's no bearing that reflection—Grandby—Dear Grandby, write I beseech you, and hasten back to the country; hasten your reconciliation with Mira. If the fault lies with her, Grandby, you die to be reconciled—if with you, you need but appear and be forgiven. Oh I read in her eye the concession of her heart? At any rate, widen not by procrastination the difference that makes you both unhappy. For my sake—Oh what might not—while the balance of my fate lies suspended, what might not your presence effect in my favour!

LETTER LXIX.

Edmund Grandby to Sir George Lovemore.

I HAVE received letters from you, Sir George, and have begun to read them several times: I have often sat down to write
to

to you too, but something always interrupts me before I finish. Yet I have a great deal to say—so many wonderful things!

Were you ever in love, Sir George? I fancy I once—I frequently catch myself in my rambles near a certain street, then suddenly recollect an interdiction I received—something of a letter—and a promise I made—Hush, don't tell—for 'tis generally deep midnight, and nobody knows me.

I cannot shew you that letter, or tell you the contents, which I forget; but believe I was ashamed of them, for I instantly hid it away in my heart, where, after freezing all my bosom like ice, it turned into fire, and ever since keeps shooting up live sparks to my head, which at times kindle to a flame that almost consumes my brain. I then set out in the rain or snow to get a little ease, but am often tormented in my way by a number of busy devils of both sexes, who carry me to their infernal places of abode: yet they cannot tempt me by all their specious arts to be as wicked as themselves, for at those times I recollect the lore I once delighted to be taught, and endeavour to teach it in my turn to others; though many, while I warn them, laugh at, and call me madman. Some attend, and say they once, like me, adored the virtue they yet could listen to with pleasure, but which 'twas too late again to love: that virtue had

fled their breasts for ever, and to seek her, was to starve: for those who possessed her temple barred their re-entrance to the dome they had profaned, while vice invited their approach to hers. Lovemore, they said that parents, guardians, lovers, had drove, and betrayed their steps. At such times the fire mounts fiercely to my brain—Lover! Betrayed! Ha! Did I not once love—confide!—And once when I was ill, very ill, one who still bore the traces of her former angel-goodness, composed my perturbed soul, and promised, would I be calm, she would be swayed by me to penitence and peace. Her, and a few, a very few beside, (among whom was distinguished a youth not born for vice) I undeceived from what they called despair—strengthened their rising fortitude—cleared, as I shewed the way they had forsook; and now, from their happy shore, they bless me.

They say they love me too: But then I fly: for what is love! A meteor shining to deceive—a shadowy rainbow dropping real tears—an echo leading from the sound that raised it—and moonbeam-tracks pursued through chilling waves!

Then, Lovemore, when far away, on some bleak heath (the tempest rattling round me) I sit and sing,

“ You said you lov’d me, Molly dear,
“ Ah why did I believe!”

And,

And, soothed by my own murmurs, my heart fills, but though bursting, and a pleasing melancholy dissolves my senses, no tears—They have often fallen for others, but they will not flow for me—I try—but cannot, cannot weep. Oh for a few tears to ease me! They will not come—they will come no more—That burning letter dries up all their springs, and they will come no more!

There was once a youth who delighted to walk in a garden of beautiful flowers, but many of them, though painted fair to the view as the rest, were poison to the smell, and others concealed, beneath their vivid foliage, the lurking murderous thorn. A lovely virgin, clad in celestial raiment, pointed from the entrance the sweet and baneful influence of each, and warned the youth to beware—He grateful bowed, and took the friendly council: but why, since he chose the fairest paths, and shunned the gay delusions round him, why then did the poor, unhappy youth—

Lovemore, did you ever see a fine ship under full sail, all spreading to the propitious breeze, and then a moment after see it dashed by the hidden rock that “ left not a wreck behind?”

They tell me the sun shines—I wonder,
were I to plunge—

Three times have my wandering steps guided me unknowing to Grosvenor-Square; yet the sight always throws me into a strange way I cannot describe. Why then do I go? I will return to the country, and seek the peace I ever found there—Yes: I shall be happy there—there I shall be far from Grosvenor-Square—But stop—Is there not something near Grandby Wood that may interrupt my repose? Oh where shall I wander from this writing in my heart!—

* * * *

I have given directions for my journey—Here I cannot longer stay and live—in the country I shall be more tranquil, and there I may plunge into the stream, and cool the flames—Oh where shall I wander from this writing in my heart!

L E T T E R LXXX.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

NO, my friend—Mr. Blomer shall not suffer more from my child's indiscretions: Neither Amelia, or her father, will allow of his returning the money his wretched wife received. The affair would certainly admit a lawsuit, but that had better be avoided. Sir Charles has written fully to Mr. Boothby
on

on the subject—'tis one I cannot bear, and fly from.

Lord Sedley is all you describe him: Mira listens, and with pleasure, whenever he speaks, but 'tis because he never speaks, of love. I know not what to think of her: she converses with her usual vivacity and ease, and pursues with the same delight the several occupations that employed her time before she left the country: nay, with greater; for her sister is now become her pupil, and from her her improvement, and perpetual pretty wonder, with a thousand sportive fancies, now gay, now serious, she derives new entertainment.

Yet I fear the malady, though concealed, preys not the less upon her heart: her bloom fades fast away; and though her cheerfulness at meals keeps every one alive, her appetite decays. She does not like to be observed, takes every thing offered her, but contrives, while she directs our attention to something else, to give away her plates in the same state they were received. Yet how can she deceive affection watchful as ours? The very servants observe her with emotion, and poor Lord Sedley—Oh how he tries to recommend—to persuade—but when he sees her hurt, he desists, and casts on me such looks of apprehensive sorrow!

Her father, yesterday, as she was slipping away her plate, took it from the servant, and holding

holding it to her with the tear starting in his eyes, said, "Mira, my love! Oh that I could see you in this as ready to oblige me as you are in every other heavenly disposition."—She took it from his hand, but her heart filling as she smiled, her efforts were in vain to suppress the rising pang, and she flew out of the room to hide it. Amelia, with all the sister in her eyes, was following, but I prevented her: I knew the sobbing girl most dreaded observation. She soon returned, with a sweet serenity of face, and eat with seeming appetite, but her maid afterwards informed me she had been ill, and intreated me no more to urge her young Lady to eat against her inclination: she was sure it would greatly harm her. Terrified at such alarming symptoms, I mentioned this without her knowledge to Doctor Wilmot, who has ordered bitters, which, to pass off the design, we all take with her before dinner; but by the momentary glow in her cheek, though she said nothing, I fancy she guesses the motive.

Yes; she shall, as you advise, be undeceived. When truly acquainted with the worthless character she pines for, she will no longer regret him, but bless her escape, and at once cast him from her heart.

Amelia too—But, from the natural turn of her disposition (though I am certain Lovemore runs strongly in her head,) I have not much

much to apprehend. Strange girl! Her very dejection (and dejected she is at times, I assure you,) has something out of the way with it; and, though real, seems to have an air with it. She has not that equality her sister possesses; at times is all life, then suddenly droops, and as quickly recovers her vivacity. I fancy she flatters herself, notwithstanding all I could say to discourage her, that the pleasure her father shewed in Sir George's company (and who could help being pleased with his gaiety and openness of heart?) was no bad sign for him, and that he might, in time, conquer all our objections. Thank Heaven she's so entirely altered, we need not apprehend her indiscretions now.

"Lord, Madam," (said the monkey this morning, talking of her sister) "what a very foolish thing it is to be violently in love! A little—just to amuse one—to have something to think of is very well. I pity Mira from my heart, but wish she were more like me in those matters, as I do to be more like her in every other."

"I'll tell you a piece of news, Amelia—Sir George Lovemore—What ails the girl?"

"Only a twinge of the tooth-ach, Madam. Bless me! how severe!"

"Severe, indeed, to change your colour so. Have it drawn immediately."

" 'Tis

" 'Tis gone, Madam, already. It often comes and goes as suddenly."

" 'Tis a fine morning: I'll take a turn in the garden."

" Shall I attend you, my Lady?"

" No; I shall soon return, and the air may prejudice your tooth" (and I was going).

" Apropos, Madam: you were saying something.—What were we talking of?"

" How should I recollect? Adieu."

" Oh now I remember—something of Sir George Lovemore. You were going to tell me some news you had heard."

" True; but we'll defer it till I return: I'm in haste."

" Oh dear my Lady, pray tell me now. We may both forget the subject by that time. What did you hear?"

" Well then—I hear his uncle is dead, and has left him four thousand a year."

" Was that all, Madam? I thought something of consequence though had kept him away so long: I suppose he is thinking of his mourning."

" That would be something of consequence, indeed. But why should you expect him so soon? He was here but the other day."

" The other day! I really thought 'was a long—Ay; I was mistaken, and was thinking of Sir George Bellamy, who called two months ago."

" Very

" Very likely. But this is not all: the estate is only conditional."

" What! my Lady—To change his name (I suppose) for this uncle's long, hideous-founding Irish one! Indeed he shan't tho', for I like Lovemore,—the name I mean, vastly: 'tis a mighty pretty name."

" He shan't! Pray what have you to say either to him, or to his name? But that's not it. He must marry the lady his Lordship designed for him; a favourite niece—Bless me, Amelia! what another violent twitch of the tooth-ach"

" No, Madam—but I hate Irish ladies. What need he go to Ireland for a wife? Sure England"—

" Sit down, my love: you can scarcely stand. Yet what is it to you where he chuses? Ah, Amelia!"—

" Why, to be sure, my Lady, I must wish him well, after—after all he said—he did, I mean: did he not almost die for me? and now—and now" (and she burst out a crying, but recovering herself amazingly) " Well, let him marry whom and where he will, 'tis nothing to me, as your Ladyship says: only 'tis so absurd, so preposterous a thing to go to Ireland for a wife; and a woman, perhaps, he never saw too—think of that, Madam! I wish she may be old, crooked, and ugly for his assurance—for his pains."—

" Ay,

" Ay, Amelia, 'tis indeed a dreadful thing to enter into such engagements rashly, you know. What were the such a woman as somebody was a man! But Lady Norah O'Laughnan, I am told, is a pattern of perfection."

" Lord, Madam! How can you repeat such odious names without coughing? They would choak me. She a pattern of perfection, indeed! Who in the world has been prejudicing you so? I am sure she must be a horrid creature."

" What signifies what she is, since 'tis nothing to you?"

" True; yet as I am—as I was under such obligations to him, one would not have him make quite a fool of himself. Pish! silly fellow! Where's my sister? I'll go and make her laugh. Ha, ha, ha! Norah O'Laughnan—Oh my jaws! Ha, ha, ha!"

Away she tripped, but whether to make her sister laugh with her, I leave you to judge. She has since affected the most extraordinary gaiety.—The little hypocrite! I like her spirit too.

I have really heard the above report confirmed; and hardly suppose Sir George will resign such a fortune to the little flying passion a few interviews raised. He is now in Exeter, and will probably soon set off for Ireland. So, my friend. all further doubts and reflections

tions respecting this young gentleman and my Amelia will be now unnecessary. I had some idea, from his good sense, of his reformation, if—Sir Charles too—but every one in his presence must be prejudiced in his favour, and, for a while, forget—we must all forget him now, in any other light than as the preserver of our child; and may Heaven reward and make him happy!

I was wishing an opportunity, in pursuance of the idea you suggested, to undeceive Mira in respect to the character of that lost young man, when the following presented itself. I had been listening to her sweet melodious voice at the harpsichord, as I traced in her fading features the deep malady at her heart not all her efforts can yet conquer. My child—such a child hourly wasting away before my eyes, and no relief for the ill—how hard! how dreadful!

Not able longer to struggle with my feelings, I went into the adjoining room and indulged my grief, while still her plaintive notes increased it. After an air or two, I heard her rustling among the papers on the music-table, and then give a heavy, lengthened sigh. She touched the notes before her; 'twas a song Grandby had addressed to her, and also beautifully set. She hem'd two or three times, and then began it. Her voice dropped

as

as she proceeded, and soon all was silence. I went softly to the door which stood half-open, and saw her holding with both her hands the spread sheet before her face. Then pressing it to her heart, and raising her streaming eyes to Heaven, she exclaimed,

“ Oh Grandby! And is it—is it so, indeed!”

My emotion discovered me—she started: I hastened to my child, and received her sobs on my aching bosom. As soon as she could speak, she cried,

“ Forgive me, my mother—I seldom indulge—but oh that song!”

Yet she took *that song*, and put it into the fire, though she continued gazing and weeping while a scrap of it remained. Then, returning to her seat, and again clasping her arms about me, she proceeded :

“ I will—indeed, Madam, I will behave better—I despair not of surmounting my weakness: allow me but a little more time, my Mama, and I yet will be all you wish me.”

She soon resumed her composure, and this occasion was not to be lost. I informed her of all you had learned of Grandby; and, from his intimacy with Sir George Lovemore, intimated the probable reason of his confused behaviour to Mr. Blomer on the subject of her sister’s flight; concluding with assuring her I should no longer fear the continuance,

of

of a passion that had only lived on ignorance, and which now she must blush to own, she must soon cease to feel. After listening to me with the most perfect serenity, (except a momentary glow when I spoke of his letters to Lady Priscilla,) with a steady voice she made me the following reply :

“ I must not deceive you, Madam. Were Mr. Grandby the man described, I could not cease to esteem him, for he had never been regarded. He has been unfortunate— more, has been culpable, highly culpable : for he not only broke the faith he owed another, one whose affection his vows had gained : but, while he cruelly left her to deplore her wrongs, and weep over his hapless infant, he as cruelly ensnared my heart by offering me one he knew to be another’s right. To its first, its only just possessor I have already resigned it : but, Madam, while I condemn his errors, I feel the stabs levelled at a character, that, except in this one unfortunate instance, where he has so weakly suffered himself to be betrayed by passion, has not on earth its equal ! Forgive me, my mother— and, dear Mrs. Boothby, forgive me ; but, indeed, you are both deceived in Grandby. Whatever strange appearances have conspired to sway your judgments, believe me you are both mistaken. Grandby is not the man you think him : I am better acquainted with
his

his virtues—I know him well, and that I need not blush for my affection, though I lament the deception that produced it, is now my only consolation."

And if her only consolation, my friend, would I wish her deprived of it? Yet should her error be the means—Oh should her health continue to decline—To thee, Oh Heaven, I commit my children! And yet will hope, while I repeat “thy will be done!” Oh bless them! or in thy mercy let me not live to see them suffer—to see them die before me!—

* * * *

LETTER LXXI.

Lord Sedley to Lord Elmour.

YOU say, my Lord, a double interest (mine and that of the family's on which mine so materially depends) prompt your and my Lady Elmour's desires to be informed of all that contributes either to aid or interrupt our wishes. The affection her Ladyship and Miss Eglington bear each other, I am well acquainted with, and could I need more proof of the superior worth of either, that mutual affection should be the warrant. Oh that both were blest as they deserve to be! And then, my Lord, what would it signify whether

whether the means interfered or not with my desires?

You ask me of my hopes? of my success? Alas! tho' all elude my fond pursuit, as water does the grasp, I have yet greater ills to bear: my own I could support—but I see Miss Eglington unhappy, and am subdued. Grandby hangs, and, while she lives, will hang about her heart: duty, reflection, sense, may teach her to resign, and bear well her sufferings; but can they loosen, but with life, the ties twined with its vital strings? My own situation leads me to the recesses of her bosom. As vain were her attempts to forget her Grandby, as mine to cease to love Miss Eglington. Whatever interrupted their felicity, it was a cruel blow—I am not satisfied, my Lord—Would she consent to yield me her hand this hour, I would not let it bless me till I enquired further.

Lady Eglington repeats to me strange reports she hears of this unhappy youth: I believe them not—I never will believe them, while supported by report alone. The shafts of calumny ever delight to plume the arrows of affliction. Grandby, driven by youth, by passion, has fallen into errors, but such a mind, as I am convinced he possesses, can never be depraved. Grandby so easily forget Mira, and admit new impressions! Grandby, after being capable of so distinguishing her,
give

give way to vice in her most detested forms! Oh the belief is as absurd as impious! Nor have I patience with the possibility. Would I could talk with him—but that will not be allowed me. Why this mysterious secrecy? Yet the first information was certainly found-ed; and Sir Charles, satisfied of its truth, re-ligiously fulfils the added request.

In some of my solitary walks about the country, I this morning strayed to Mr. Grand-by's seat: the owner's taste shines through every thing about him—all is improved na-ture, grace, and elegant simplicity. Several labourers were busily employed—I led the the converstaion—it needed not much to call out the ever-grateful subject: such praises, such blessings flowing warm from the honest rustic heart! What noble instances I then heard of liberality, of benevolence, as well as of wisdom and attention. And is this the man low hidden malice dares attack? Oh Grandby—though our interests do clash on the subject nearest our souls, this shall not divide our friendship, will you but answer to that now filling my bosom—Yes, my Lord—I will endeavour to cultivate the friendship of this wondrous youth—he is hourly expected—but with glistening eyes and faltering tongues he poor, the sick, and the industrious, with whom I conversed, informed me, that, while with joy they awaited his return to them,

them, they had tidings of his ill health that terrified them all. How well those accounts agree with that of his dissipation, my Lord! If any thing detains him long, I will seek him in town—I feel myself more than ever attached to him.

I related to Lady Eglington, on my return, the cause of my delay: she wept at a detail so congenial with her former opinions—but, unhappily prepossessed against the destroyer of her Mira's peace, she imputes the illness (which however she still regrets) to his supposed late excesses. Impossible, my Lord! —Would to Heaven he were arrived!

Amelia daily improves: how can it now be otherwise? her sister before her—Lady Prisciila away. I fancy, though, the handsome hero, who liberated the captive maid, has enslaved her little heart, as well as his own, by the noble exploit. I never saw Sir George Lovemore but once—as far as externals go, he has every thing in his favour. Though my opinion of Lady Priscilla's superior talents always soared to an extraordinary height, imagination could not reach her infamy.

Lady Eglington told me too of letters this woman had received from Grandby—I saw from the first she loved him, but saw too that disgust she raised, which not all his efforts at politeness could conceal. She rival Mira!

Prepos-

Preposterous idea! I shall soon do myself the honour of writing again. With the sincerest wishes for the perfect restoration of my Lady Elmour's health, believe me, my dear Lord,

Your most attached friend,

And humble servant,

SEDLEY.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



